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#70

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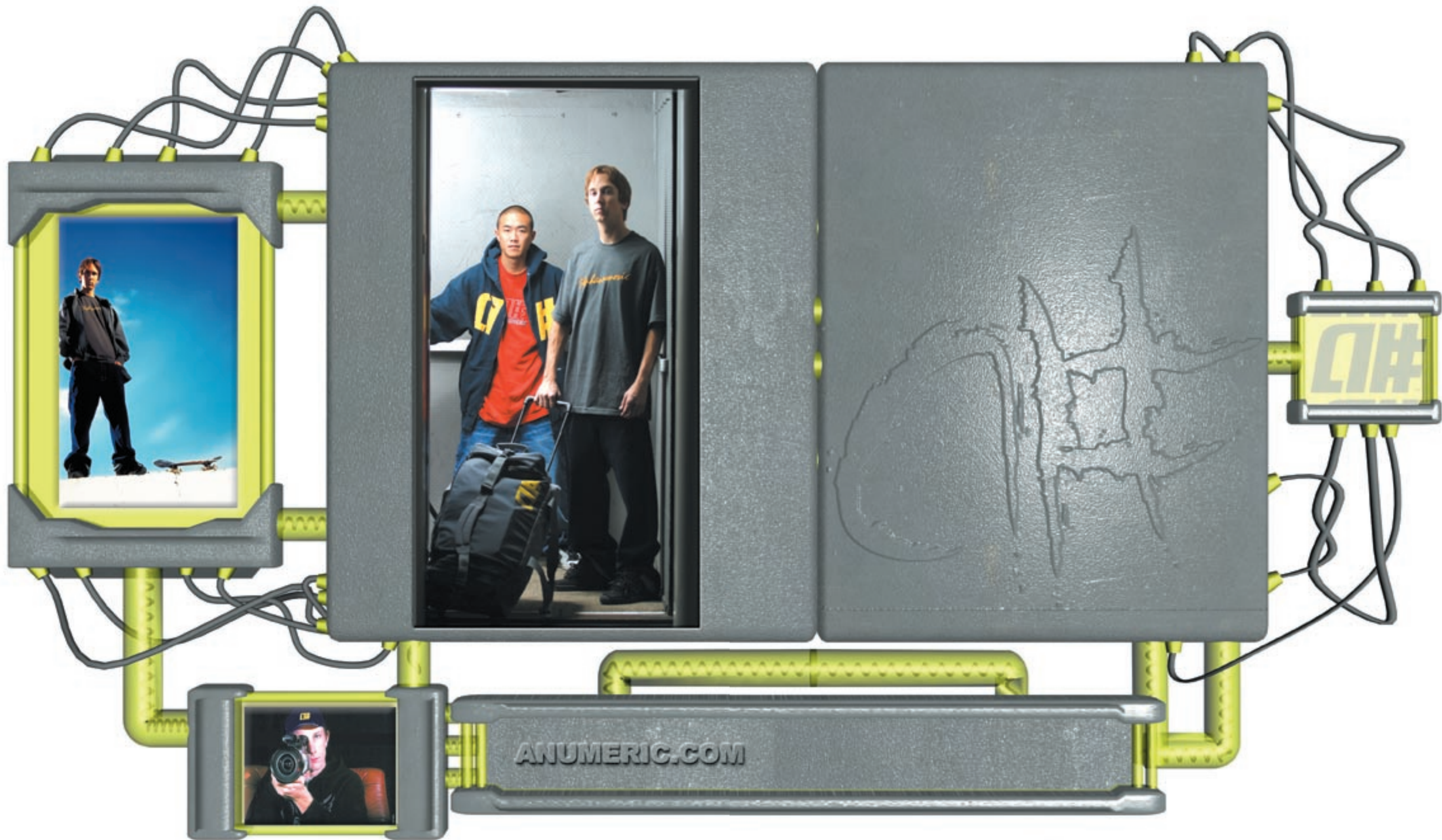
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UP IN DA CLUB: RICHARD DEVINE TEES OFF
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ED'S RANTO9.03

ED'S RANT



Jessica Miller

Interview over by: XLR8R disposes of mega-communicative glitch supastar Kid606 for the time being.

DEAR JON

This is not a "Dear John" letter written by a weary wife to a battlefield soldier, but rather, a letter to you, my longtime friend. It's been a while, hasn't it? And it's getting harder to reach you on the phone these days. But, truth be told, it's hard to reach *me* on the phone (and I have three lines) so I thought I'd write instead.

I wanted to catch you up with life, the mag and runnings in Nor Cal. First, you're down in Los Angeles, and I'm sure you've seen the exodus of San Franciscans and other Bay Area types flocking down there in search of jobs and cheaper housing. The official government stats say that SF had more people leave this year than any other major city in the US—around 13,000 left—that's a 1.6% decline in population. But there's also this general impression that the LA arts scene is "hot." From what I've seen of it, it actually is, so our next issue (#71) will be all about LA—a city issue, like last year's all-SF magazine.

This issue we're tackling all things Tigerbeat6, Kid606's label, and their whatever-goes spirit got me to thinking about our collective punk rock days. I mean, in a way, So Cal punk begot the San Diego post-punk scene, which begot SD noise-punk labels like Gravity and Vinyl Communications, and that's the environment that originally inspired and annoyed a young Miguel Depedro—Kid606—to start making gabberpunk with cheap drum machines and samplers. I'm sure he attended more than one show at the Ché Café on the UCSD campus in his day, and tried to get down with its vegan politics. I remember playing a show there once and having Jello Biafra ask if we'd give him one of our records. This was at the height of his spoken word days, so we told him he had to buy one like everyone else. He did.

But those LA punk days were the foundation. From slogging Minor Threat 7's with you at Rhino in Westwood (well, *you* slogged 'em, I just watched and learned and restocked the world music section), to taking the bus to the free outdoor downtown LA Street Scene music festival in '89, where I saw UB40 live and skinheads rioting. There were Bad Brains shows in Long Beach, Nirvana shows at Raji's in Hollywood and Poison Idea shows at the Country Club in Reseda. There we're the all-ages shows at Jabberjaw, where no less than three close friends were robbed at gunpoint.

Before I knew it, I was listening to more Blue Note and Prestige jazz records than Lookout or Dischord. The rare jazz-funk gave way to acid jazz (Brand New Heavies and Snowboy), which ushered in jungle and trip-hop. Then you were asking me if I had heard Omar or Young Disciples, and I was like, "Nah, man, I'm listening to this Original Rockers and Biosphere." Then it all took off—the after-hours clubs, the ambient parties, the Sketch Pad; we switched record shop jobs for others, and gangsta rap, Wu Tang, Shabba Ranks and Cypress Hill were the soundtrack of the streets. And it's still all good.

So now it's like 10 years beyond all *that*—post-LA and me moving back to SF, and the implosion of LA's small club scene, and post-SF's death-by-dotcom, and we have a whole new cycle starting. I'm kind of excited about it, 'cause people are just sort of *doing it*. They're not worried about what their music or art sounds like, they're just trying to make something happen. And it's okay to me that kids don't know about the original punk days or DiY or making zines or whatever—I say let this generation make its own rules. Let punk be what it was in those days, and let Tigerbeat be its own thing now.

I'm also digging that in this current issue we have NY's DJ Smash, who—along with other Giant Step regulars like Crazy French Man and Pal Joey—got me into all the jazz dance stuff in the early '90s, the modern reverberations of which can be heard in the sound of UK broken beat today (the singers of which scene we profile here also).

I hope we can still stay in touch, Jon, we've liked music too long now not to. We still have way-different tastes, but that's okay, 'cause I learn from your critiques and opinions. I'll be down your way soon to trade some records, tell some stories and try and make sense of these years. See you soon.

-Tomas



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STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF Andrew Smith (andrew@xlr8r.com)
EDITOR Tomas A. Palermo (tomas@xlr8r.com)
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Vivian Host (vivian@xlr8r.com)
ASSOCIATE EDITOR/REVIEWS EDITOR Ron Nachmann (nachmann@xlr8r.com)
SENIOR WRITER Toph One (redwine@xlr8r.com)
EDITORIAL INTERNS Julia Chan, Cameron Macdonald

STAFF WRITERS Eric K. Arnold, Pete Babb, Mike Battaglia, Susanna Bolle, Justi Echeles, Matt Fisher, James Friedman, Rob Geary, Alexis Georgopoulos, Steve Goodman, Mike Gwertzman, Heath K. Hignight, Christine Hsieh, Selena Hsu, Gerald "Gik" Kelleher, Anna Klaffer, J. David Marston, Luke Magnuson, Kathleen Maloney, Mark McNeill, Stacey Meyn, Chris Muniz, Margaret Murray, Steve Nickolls, Chris Orr, Brion Paul, Brock Phillips, Tim Pratt, Joe Rice, Philip Sherburne, Speed Demon, Dave Stelfox, Paul Sullivan, Tony Ware, Jon Weldon
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Andreas Busch, Anna Chapman, Stephan Christiaan, Liz Cordingley, Sara Jayne Crow, Dmatrix, Matt Eberhart, Jon Freer, Fitz Gitler, Forest Green, Tim Haslett, David Hemingway, Ross Hogg, Lynne D. Johnson, Andrew Jones, June Joseph, Timo Kangas, Steve McLay, Peter Nicholson, Tamara Palmer, Dave Segal, Praxis, Dan Sicko, Rob Riddle, Dave Stenton, Alan Stewart, Rachel Swan, Jesse Terry, Scott Thill, Martin Turenne, Brolin Winning, Curtis Zack

CREATIVE DIRECTOR/STYLE AND CULTURE EDITOR David Weissberg (david@xlr8r.com)
PRODUCTION MANAGER Brianna Sagstad (brianna@xlr8r.com)
PRODUCTION/WEB INTERNS Sam Care, Noah Sherburn
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS David Axelbank, Kareem Black, Marcus Clackson, Jessica Miller, Michael Schmelling, Zen Sekizawa, Christopher Woodcock
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS Julie Baldwin, David Black, Samuel Care, Renato del Valle, Joe Hammeke, Yoshika Horita, Anna K.O., Syd Kato, Andy Mueller, David Naugle, Patricia Niven, Naomi O'Connell, Adam Rumall, Philip Sherburne, Paul Sullivan
STAFF ILLUSTRATORS Abigail's Party (abigails_party23@hotmail.com), Nago Richardis (Nonconceptual)
CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS Justin at Demo Design, Mambo, Kenzo Minami, PAM, Brent Rollins, Kate Ruth, Struggle Inc., Type Stereo, Unvisible

PUBLISHER Andrew Smith (andrew@amalgam.us)
CO-PUBLISHER Arias Hung (arias@xlr8r.com)
OPERATIONS/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Michael Prommer (michael@amalgam.us)
DISTRIBUTION/MARKETING MANAGER Emily Griffin (emily@amalgam.us)
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR/EAST COAST SALES Melanie Samarasinghe (melanie@amalgam.us)
WEST COAST ADVERTISING SALES Sue Kim (sue@amalgam.us)
ACCOUNTING MANAGER Jamie Kochan (jamie@amalgam.us)
SUBSCRIPTIONS/DIRECT SALES Jesse Terry (jesse@xlr8r.com)
MARKETING INTERN Jialin Luh

ADVERTISING: Dial 415.861.7583, fax 415. 861.7584, email advertising@xlr8r.com, or mail XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.
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CONTACT US: San Francisco Main Hq. 1388 Haight St. No.105, San Francisco, CA 94117, letters@xlr8r.com, Fax 415.861.7584.

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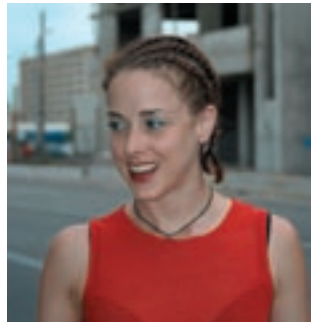


Advertisement for Juana Molina Segundo album. Features a photo of Juana Molina, text describing her music, and album title 'THE NOTWIST NEON GOLDEN'.

Large stylized illustration for Fuel TV. Includes a hand pouring liquid into a funnel, a large green creature, and various icons like a motorcycle, a house, and a bandage. Text includes '24/7 ACTION SPORTS TELEVISION', 'WWW.FUEL.TV', and 'FUEL IS HERE'.

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CONTRIBUTORS



JULIE BALDWIN

When Julie is not getting busy to the Diwali riddim at a Soul Shakedown dancehall party, or sticking to her Titanium like glue at the local coffee shop, she can be found at Waterloo Records making love to the music that moves her: everything from downtempo to drum & bass, jazz to hip-hop, IDM to dub...as long as its got soul. As a programmer/photographer/yoga teacher/massage therapist, this 512

native is notorious for making your world a better place with her smile. So, if you don't want to be infected by her goodness, we suggest not looking directly into her eyes...

www.juliebaldwin.com



CHRISTIAAN GÜNTHER

Born in Holland, raised in South Africa and schooled in California, Christiaan's worldly upbringing has molded his passion for overlooking boundaries and bringing diversity to his favorite field: fashion! His newest adventure is heading up the menswear division of Caballero and Günther, a high-end ready-to-wear fashion house based in Los Angeles. Christiaan is a regular contributor to *XLR8R*. His latest styling gig for Adidas's "All Day All Night" campaign can be seen in *Vibe*, *Stuff* and *Maxim*.

christiaangunther@hotmail.com



DAVID HEMINGWAY

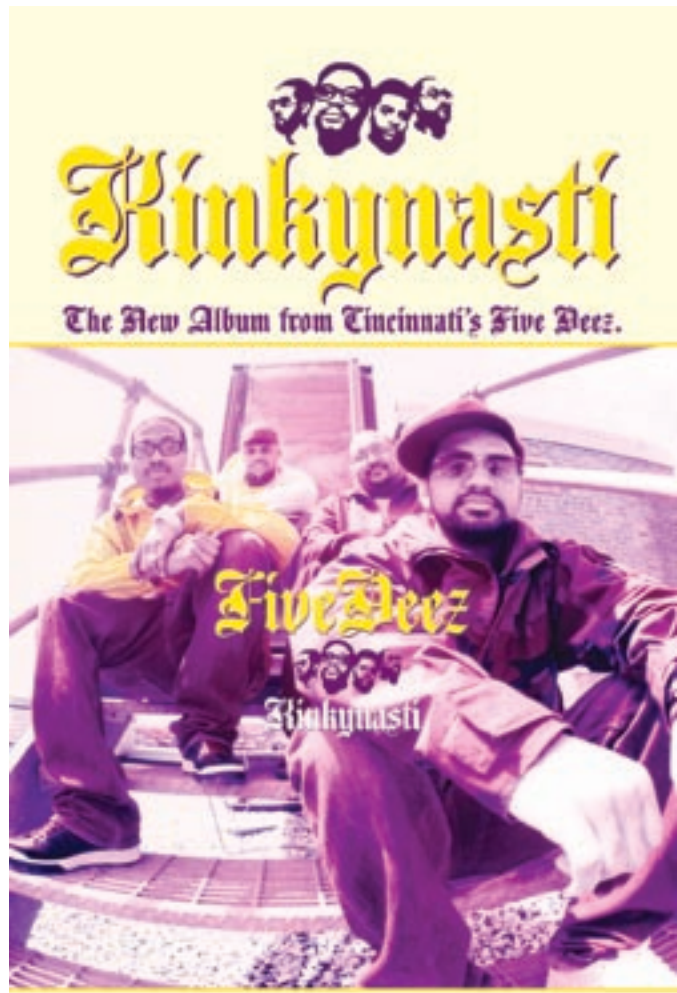
David Hemingway lives in London, where he contributes to *Record Collector* magazine. He likes to listen to bass sounds from the amplified synapses of crayfish neural tissues, scratchy sounds derived from mice trapped in wastepaper baskets and recordings made during protests against the International Monetary Fund. He hopes one day to appear as a sound source on a Matmos record.



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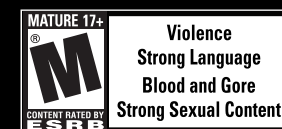
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PlayStation 2



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LETTERS

All letters printed "as is."



FANS FIGHT BACK
Fuck you Xler8r (sic) and fuck Bitter Bastard, whoever he is (I know that's not his real name). Björk is real artist not that shitty electronica music you cover! She has more creativity in her thumb-nail than you'll ever

have in your lifetime!!!!

I hope you go out of business, Kathy Ireland p.s. She never said "Fuck the Buddhists," so you print lies too.

Bastard Responds...

Oh crumbs, Kathy. No, actually I think Björk did say that. In the now-defunct Ray Gun Magazine from September 1997, in fact, in which the cover star is everyone's favorite fat faced little troll. Regarding Bitter Bastard not being my real name—no shit, Shaft; my real name is BJ. Oh, and that bit about electronica sucking and what not, you need to pull the snowflakes out of your ears, 'cause electronic music is now the very foundation over which Björk karokes. Snuggles, BJ "Bitter" Bastard

FANS DIG FRIEDMAN

Compliments to James Friedman for a tack-sharp and lucidly written article on Kostas. He really got to the heart of what's so fascinating and compelling about this important young artist. The magazine looks great.

Sean Gullette

FANS SAY FUCK GLOSSY PAPER

I have a few comments on your pub that are random but important as I feel like I am a stereotype of your demographic.

When I saw last month's issue I was seriously bummed by the new cover stock, which played itself like a metaphor. One thing I always loved about you guys was how you continued to do your own thing, whether it was putting some random UK fucks that nobody has heard of on the cover or donating several pages to the raddest T-shirts around. Your design is always top notch, I might add. Your choice of matte uncoated paper stock was an indicator of this, as I'm sure it cost quite a bit more but you did it anyway.

So when I saw the new stock I thought here we go, another mag down the shitter. Judge Jules and Tall Paul will be on the next cover and I am out another great mag to get info. *URB* (which I am sure you hate to be compared to) fell off quite some time ago so you guys were my last and only hope.

Your most recent issue, though, is a no-fucking-brainer. It is, in my humble opinion, the best issue you have ever done. This might be because of my tastes, but still. I won't call you out for biting *Wax Poetics* (reggae 7-inches) either cuz it still needed to be done. I have been saying for at least a year or two, "Why the fuck haven't these

trendier than trendy mags put Madlib or Prefuse on a cover? What the fuck are they doing?" You guys killed two birds with one stone and did it the proper justice. The layout is also as tech as it gets, and your typography is solid. You guys just sealed *URB*'s coffin with this issue. I guess I am saying props. You guys have my utmost respect, but your cover stock still sucks. Go back to the old one please.

Nate Bosshard

Yo guys, I don't know what's happening, but you've done the readers wrong with this glossy cover. It makes *XLR8R* look like all the competition and to me that's a definite reduction of your standards. It doesn't feel right when I read it, it doesn't look right when I flip through, and worst of all, now my magazines just won't stay in place because the covers are so dang slippery! Please, please switch back to the old covers/page style. This magazine isn't just about looks, it's about feel too.

Stephen Marsh

Andrew Smith responds...

Thanks for the letters. Let me respond to a few things. The cover stock is actually the same as it has been for some time, but the UV varnish is a gloss, not a matte. This actually happened by accident when we switched printers, and we decided to roll with it!

Thanks for the positive feedback on the content. We are trying to ride the balance of staying ahead of the curve and simultaneously gaining new readers. After all, we feel that as many people as possible should know about the music, etc. that we cover.

FANS MISS FASHION

What happened to your guys' fly fashion spreads? I miss those pictures of soccer hooligans, naked girls with bananas, girls with birds on their heads and chicks duking it out. (Did Aguilera rip you guys off or what?) Fuck music, more art! Except Autechre, of course.

Carl S.

FANS FACT-CHECK

A friend just told me that *BPM* magazine was bought by the record label Moonshine a while ago? Is this true? After he told me I checked out a copy and went through the stories and totally noticed a huge bias toward Moonshine's artists! This seems totally evil and backhanded, nevermind the fact that *BPM* has been getting cheesier and cheesier!

Keep up the good work *XLR8R*, when I read your stories at least I know I can trust what you say!

Ron Murphy

CORRECTIONS

In issue 67's two-step reviews and in 69's Sticky piece we incorrectly claimed that Donae'o is produced by Sticky. Donae'o (a.k.a. Mr. Fidget) produces his own tracks. In issue 69's leftfield guest reviews, Mutamassik and Morgan Craft's album, *Rough Americana*, was mistakenly listed as an EP to be released on Sound-Ink Records. It's actually needed to be done. I have been saying for at least a year or two, "Why the fuck haven't these

BITTER BASTARD

Bitter Bastard's
10 Nastiest Rumors

Aside from being cantankerous and bitter, BJ "Bitter" Bastard is also somewhat of a nasty gossip. BJ specializes in lurking around backstage at raves, looking for trance DJs smoking crack and house superstars getting blowjobs underneath the decks. Some of the stuff he's heard and seen would make Vanessa Del Rio blush. We pried BJ off the pot long enough to find out about 10 of the raunchiest rumors in the business. As for which ones are true...we're not telling.

1. Black Tragic Bay Area outfit Blaktronics got in a kerfuffle recently with broken beatster Charlie Dark over the use of their name. Dark has been performing—with King Britt, Dego and others—as Blacktronica despite the fact that Blaktronics have been at this game for years now. Fight! Fight!

2. The Rapture vs. Chik Chik Chik In a recent issue of the *Bay Guardian*, The Rapture dissed fellow dance-punksters !!!, calling the New York-by-way-of-Sacramento band "dirty hippies." A bewildered !!! singer Nic Offer exclaimed, "We gave them some mushrooms and a cowbell, and now they're calling us dirty hippies!"

3. Moby's Dick Rumor has it that Moby used to like to play the "Penis Tension Game" with friends at large socialite events (say, the MTV Music Awards). The "Penis Tension Game" is where you go around and try to touch people with your exposed penis without being caught. The person who touches the most famous people without being caught wins.

4. Totally Warped When traveling across Europe on the Warp Records "Magic Bus Tour" the artists took the name very seriously, buying acid, etc. and then dumping it before each border, then buying more. At one point an *NME* journalist was traveling with them. They were all tripping balls on acid and the artists decided to try and freak the journalist by. They succeeded by showing him a video clip on Richard Devine's laptop with the self-explanatory name "Champagne Enema."

5. BT stands for Big Truth-Stretcher When BT's studio got robbed in December 2001, his whole fourth album was stolen, preventing him from playing live for New Year's Eve and the months after. Yeah, right. The real story is that BT wanted to do a DJ tour but no one would let him 'cos he couldn't mix his way out of a paper bag.

6. Mo' Money, Mo' Problems Roll Deep Crew's Dizee Rascal may be hot on the heels of his new album for XL, but that didn't stop him from gangster business in Ayia Napa, the UK garagist's answer to Ibiza. Rascal was stabbed three times (including the butt) by an unknown assailant. The streets are saying it has something to do with Rascal's mic feud with So Solid star Asher D; Solid MC Megaman was questioned in connection with the attack, but let go.

7. Drum & bass is dead.

8. Larry Tee offered young boys drugs for sex. Hey. Who hasn't?

9. Cracked Out Besides lives, crack/coke/crank also kill creativity and responsibility. Just ask former "Superstar DJ" Keoki, techno founder Juan Atkins and former Pharcyde frontman Fatlip—all rumored to be rabid fans of the magical c-word trifecta. Though Atkins and Keoki are still scoring gigs (we're still waiting for that solo album, Fatlip), promoters are just happy when they manage to show up.

10. Tidy McTidypants Drum & bass is often seen as the dirtiest of the electronic music genres. But we know for a fact that a certain pair of jungle DJs from the Renegade Hardware crew iron every single item of their clothing—including their boxer shorts—before they leave the hotel.

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**AUDIOFILE:
POSTAL SERVICE**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A LAPTOP GENIUS AND AN INDIE SONGWRITER CRAFT THEIR OWN FANTASYLAND?

Truth may be stranger than fiction, but fiction is often kinder than fact. At least it is in the case of Postal Service. Belying their boring, quotidian moniker, the outfit creates delightful bleep-pop songs that play like the soundtrack to a modern-day John Hughes movie, full of bittersweet moments and happily awkward encounters.

Vocalist and songwriter Benjamin Hibbard (best known for fronting Seattle-based dream-pop outfit Death Cab for Cutie) says that imagining scenes in his head is a crucial part of creating Postal Service's emotionally vulnerable prose. "Almost all of the Postal Service's [lyrics are] fantasy and fiction," he avers. "As I get older, I become more interested in writing fiction...and I'm not having as many adventures as I once did. I find it more challenging to come up with a story then to write about my walk to the bar."

Although it's Hibbard who delivers such lines as "*I am thinking it's a sign/that the freckles in our eyes are mirror images/and when we kiss they're perfectly aligned*" in an endearing lilt, he shouldn't get all the credit for Postal Service's tender touches. Jenny Smith, of Saddle Creek label outfit Rilo Kiley, contributes vocals to the record, and every track from Postal Service—who collaborate by sending iterations of each track back and forth through the mail—starts with odd machine bumbles and pulsating one-two clacks from Jimmy Tamborello's computer (which is named Bialik, after child star Mayim Bialik, of *Blossom* fame).

Tamborello (best known for his work as Dntel on LA's Plug Research label) says that the project reflects the time he and Hibbard have spent hanging out. "It was always kind of fun and goofy, and I think that sort of forced itself into the music," he reminisces. Hibbard concurs, and sings the praises of Tamborello's soft-spoken influence and production genius. "Watching him work is just amazing because he just seems to move a switch or touch something and all of a sudden there's gold coming out of the speakers and he doesn't even seem to think it's a big deal. Sometimes I would have suggestions for things that I have no idea how to do. I'd say something like 'Jimmy, it would be really great if the whole mix just kind of crumbled like a piece of paper right there.' And Jimmy would just do it."

For Tamborello, the thrill of Postal Service wasn't necessarily in creating the beats, but in the actual dreamlike quality of the group itself. "We were here in a bar in LA when Jenny and Ben came down from Seattle to finish mixing the album. I was really enjoying being around them, but I all of a sudden I realized that Postal Service was sort of a fake band," says Tamborello. "It felt like it was this weird fantasy that we were going to finish this project and go our separate ways."}]

www.subpop.com

Postal Service (from left): Benjamin Hibbard, Jimmy Tamborello and Jenny Smith

XLR8R'S SUMMER

BOOKMOBILE



BOOK U WANT In an era when irony is often so transparent as to be facile, it may be hard to fathom the silly/savant wonder that was Devo. They came from Ohio. They wore flowerpots on their head, not unlike the Residents interpreting Kraftwerk. They proclaimed humans to be devolving as a species. Last, but not least, they wrote some of the most spastic, acerbic, oblong pop ever to make it onto FM radio. Strange, then, that no defining book has been written about them. Until now. Thanks to Jade Dellinger and David Giffels, *Are We Not Men? We are Devo!* (\$30; hardcover, SAF) delivers all the most interesting bits fit to print on Mark Mothersbaugh and company. Just in time for the costumed art-punk revival.

Alexis Georgopoulos
www.devobook.com, www.safpublishing.com



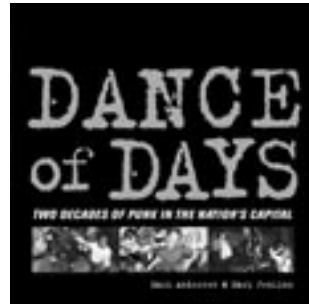
MERCURY RISING Taking obsession to new heights, author Daniel Nester delivers 140 pages of solipsistic poetry about his relationship to the band Queen. Recontextualizing glam's founders in the context of twat-rocker Courtney Love, Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl, and even '80s divas the Pointer Sisters, *God Save My Queen* (\$13; softcover, Soft Skull Press) shows what would happen if they always let NYU grad students write the liner notes. Each poem is painstakingly worded—often with obtuse footnotes; Nester's voice shifts between using Queen as the soundtrack, the backbeat, and sometimes the filter through which his own personal experiences achieve meaning. And now, here's a sample lyric from this fanatical love song: "Hard to think of them being so young," hums Nester about "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." "Emeritus appearance on NBC, Frogger T-shirt, corporate logo jacket—innocent then, before LA and marriage trouble, a best friend ending. Nothing planned or payola-complaining." Vivian Host

www.softskull.com



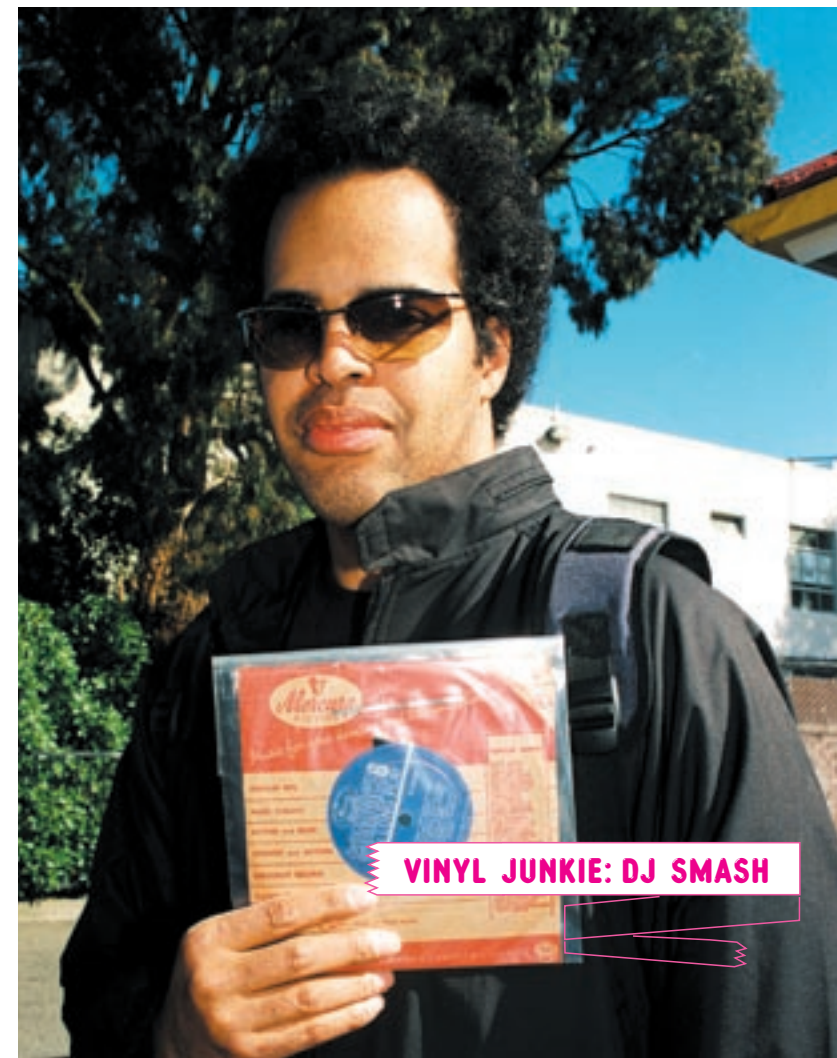
PERMANENT MIDNIGHT Why review a book on Jimi Hendrix in *XLR8R*? The answer is simple: its author. Since the '80s, Greg Tate has been responsible for some of the best music journalism and cultural commentary in the US. His long-running column in the *Village Voice* made reading every issue mandatory. Throughout *Midnight Lightning: Jimi Hendrix and the Black Experience* (\$18.95; hardcover, Lawrence Hill Books), Tate's remarkable, effortless style and depth of musical understanding mean that the connections he makes between Hendrix and such disparate artists as Akufen, DJ Spooky, Pauline Oliveros, DJ/Rupture, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Jeff Mills are never a stretch. That Hendrix broke every rule an African-American (artist) is supposed to follow, and that many black folks thought he played "whiteboy music," are the paradoxes that Tate unravels here. Not the least of this book's virtues is the sheer pleasure of reading such imaginatively conceived music journalism—a rare thing indeed. *Tim Haslett*

www.lawrencehillbooks.com



SLAM DANCE *Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk in the Nation's Capital* (\$19.95; softcover, Akashic Books), now in its third reprint, is the ultimate punk fanboy wet dream: 416 densely packed pages that recount Washington D.C.'s rich punk history all the way back to the late '70s. Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins leave no amp turned as they work their way through all the ins and outs of one of the country's most influential rock towns—all the minute trivia you could ever want about infighting, bands' ethical dilemmas and whose style begat whose is included. The writing is a bit dry—best taken in one-chapter doses for anyone who doesn't live, breathe and sleep straightedge hardcore—but *Dance of Days* is still a best buy for those seeking to educate themselves on the legacy created by Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Fugazi, Bratmobile, and on and on. *Vivian Host*

www.akashicbooks.com



JUKEBOXES KNOW BEST. THE SEVEN-INCH SINGLE IS STILL THE MOST ENDURING AUDIO FORMAT THIS CENTURY. NEW YORK'S DJ SMASH RAIDS THE 45 BINS TO PROVE OUR POINT.

All respect and praises due to Mark of the Flavor Unit, but when it comes to jazz, Wayne "DJ Smash" Hunter could very well be the 45 King. Perhaps best known to beat-lovers worldwide for his mid-'90s breakbeat-style production compilations, Fat Jazzy Grooves (which also featured the likes of Peanut Butter Wolf, I-Cue, and The Prunes), Smash has stayed active as a DJ, producer and compiler. He's done extensive work with the famed Blue Note label, helping bring forth the *Blue Breakbeats* records, reissuing the best and most famously sampled works by artists like Lou Donaldson, Grant Green and Reuben Wilson. He's also been speaking with some top-flight producers, trying to gain input as to which tracks he should put on several forthcoming compilations he will cull from the label's vast vaults.

Of course, it isn't just about jazz with the soft-spoken Smash. He's also well versed in the worlds of funk, soul and roots reggae. Perhaps most importantly, despite many years of hardcore music scholarship, he hasn't become jaded. Don't let the appropriately cool exterior fool you: DJ Smash still gets excited about music every day. On top of that, he's still a disciple of records, especially 45s. He laments the forced decline of the 45, wishing that more contemporary labels would issue singles on seven-inch to take advantage of the format's clarity and portability.

With all this in mind, when *XLR8R* heard Smash was going to be in our neck of the woods, we decided to take him to a few of the top local spots for 45s, let him have at it, and have him tell us about the best find from each store. Here are the results from a day spent among 45s. Check out DJ Smash's *discography* at www.discogs.com/artist/DJ_Smash



BOOK SPOTLIGHT



TOWN UNBOUND Initially compiled to coincide with an exhibition at Oslo's Photography Galley, *Kim Hiorthøy's Katalog* basks in the excellence of daily life—a skateboard leaned against a wall, a kitchen sink, a road covered in slushy snow, horses in a field. "I think in many ways that daily life is the most extreme experience we have—just there's so much of it," explains the Norwegian filmmaker/illustrator/designer/musician. "Simply being here is fairly overwhelming in itself, at least to me."

With *Katalog*, Hiorthøy eschewed his compulsion to simply document the exhibition. "I wanted to make something that was more a thing in itself, a meditation on photographs," he says. "Most of the photos in it are by me, some are taken by my grandmother, some by my father. There are a few found ones."

Hiorthøy designs sleeves for the estimable Rune Grammofon label and makes music (which seems equidistant between Four Tet and Aphex Twin) for the Smalltown Supersound label, but nevertheless claims there is no correlation between his sound and images. He's also loath to ascribe "meaning" to his work. "I wonder what an image of a face-down doll in *Katalog* is intended to say," he ponders. "Take a photograph of something—your neighbour or your mother, a bicycle, anything you like that would seem interesting to you to photograph—then show it to me and then tell me what you intended for that photograph to say, and I'll tell you." *David Hemingway*

Katalog is out now via *Smalltown Superbooks*, www.smalltownsuperbooks.com.

IN THE FUTURE: DRUM & BASS PRODUCER JOHN B



Boys will know how to put on good makeup, everyone will play guitar and I will have a 1,000,000 Gig iPod with every synthesizer song ever on it.

The Store: Open Mind Music
The Find: Little Sister—"Somebody's Watching You"/Marvin Gaye "Funky Space Reincarnation" (tie)
The Reason: *Little Sister was Rose Stone, Sly Stone's little sister. She did a solo album, which I've never seen, but she had two singles, one called "I'm the One," then this one, which is the one I've been looking for. Sly Stone produced the whole album, and Rose Stone played trumpet, too, and they used beatbox on the whole album. The little cheesy beatbox [keyboards] that they had in the '70s, so the songs are all really easy to jack, because they're all at a set tempo. The a-side got all the radio attention, but the b-side, "Stanga," is an instrumental, real funky, that gutbucket bluesy funk Sly Stone's known for. The other record is just a great Marvin Gaye song. It's off the Here My Dear album—he called it the "divorce album" or the "alimony album," because he made it after his divorce in order to get the money for alimony payments.*

The Store: Rooky Ricardo's
The Find: Idris Muhammed—"Could Heaven Ever Be Like This"
The Reason: *The store had that deal going where you could buy three 45s for five dollars, and I had eight. I wanted to round it out and have nine, so I'm looking and looking for one more, and wouldn't you know it, I came across this record. This is something I've been looking for for a very long time. It's one of my favorite records, and I want to have it in every possible configuration that exists. He did a couple disco albums that mostly weren't that great, but this song makes up for all of those. It's a disco thing, but it's a really beautiful song, too. I have it on a 12-inch promo, and I'm also putting it on a compilation that I'm working on called Groove Collections, but to find it on 45 was a great deal.*

The Store: Amoeba Records
The Find: Quincy Jones—*Quincy Jones Plays for Pussycats* (33 1/3 rpm 7-inch)
The Reason: *Getting that whole album on one seven-inch. It's sealed up, which makes me believe that it's [in] mint [condition]. And Quincy is one of my heroes, so out of the six tunes on here, I'm sure there's something on here that I could play or jack. I've been collecting these [33 1/3 rpm 7-inches], so it's good to have something like this by somebody that I'm really into. If you were to see this album in a store, it'd probably be at least \$25-\$30, but to get it on 7-inch for two dollars, that's the highlight of the day so far.*



HIP-HOP'S FIVE-FOOT ASSASSIN SERVES UP NEW FLAVORS AS HE TAPS INTO HIS TRINIDADIAN ROOTS.

Here's a funky introduction of how nice he is: Malik Taylor—also known as Mutty Ranks, better known as Phife Dawg, and best known as a founding member of A Tribe Called Quest—set the hip-hop world on its ear in 1990 with Tribe's first album, *People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm*.

After traveling the world with Tribe, the 32-year-old Queens native settled down in Atlanta, where he linked up with DJ/producer Rasta Root. The two immediately clicked culturally (both share Trinidadian roots) and musically, and decided to found a label together, Smokin' Needles Records. After Tribe's much-publicized breakup in 1998, Phife released *Ventilation: Da LP* on Groove Attack, but he's putting out his second solo effort, *Songs in the Key of Phife*, on his own label. The album showcases his West Indian roots, as well as his musical and personal transformation over the past few years.

"On my last solo album, *Ventilation*, that's exactly what it was," Phife explains. "I was ventin', just lettin' out everything that I was in despair about." Since then, he's gotten engaged ("It's kept me sane") and is now in a considerably happier place. "Right now, I just wanna have fun, [but] I'm not gonna be makin' no wack, happy-go-lucky music or nothin' like that."

The self-proclaimed "five-foot assassin" has never been short on originality. A lifetime reggae fan, he was one of the first MCs to augment his battle braggadocio with Jamaican patois—at times to the befuddlement of fans. When told that most fans think his line on Tribe's "Award Tour" said "livin' mad fat like an oversize Bambi," he chuckles. "Oversize *mampi*," he enunciates. "A thick girl!"

Someone who surely knew the deal was dancehall-top shotta Hawkeye, who joins Phife on "Diggy Dialect," a track that sounds both yard and foreign. "It's about time that dancehall got its shine the way that it's supposed to," says Phife. "Shabba [Ranks] got his shine at the time, so did Buju [Banton].

VP Records is killin' it right now!" He beams proudly. "That's outta Jamaica Queens, my area, so I'm real happy about that."

But if the music leaves the dancehalls, will it face the same dangers hip-hop did upon leaving the parks? "Let's say you put 16 songs on an album. Don't water everything down. Gimme eight and eight. Eight just wild-out records—dancehall records—and gimme eight that can possibly get that radio play."

Can we expect eight and eight when all four original Tribe members—including Phife's best friend Jarobi—start working on their reunion album this summer? "[Tribe] was always like that anyway," he exclaims. "We did what we felt was bangin'. If the radio was diggin' it, we got love. If they weren't, we got love from the street, regardless." Although Phife knows how to deliver the dopeness, even he's not sure what the reformed Tribe will sound like. "We're gonna take our time," he says. "We gotta be Tribe before anything else."

Look for Phife's new online sports column "Only From the Mind of the Phifer" at www.spitkicker.com under SpitKronicle.



BRITISH BEATSMITH WILL HOLLAND'S PRECISION PROGRAMMING CUTS A SWATHE THROUGH DOWN-TEMPO, FUNK AND AFROBEAT.

The release of the first 7-inch from Will Holland's Quantic Soul Orchestra, a live slab of raw deep funk called "Super 8," resulted in a tumult of gig offers for the band. There was just one problem. "The band didn't exist," Holland explains, laughing.

Just another bedroom producer knocking out faux live grooves? Not quite. Holland, a 23-year-old wunderkind, had already released two feisty, funk-fueled solo albums on Brighton's Tru Thoughts label under the moniker Quantic. Both *The 5th Exotic* and *Apricot Morning* navigated contrasts between melancholic atmosphere and damaging groove without hesitation, recalling classic Wild Bunch output while traversing uptempo and downtempo styles. The two discs were soon followed by Quantic Soul Orchestra's debut album, *Stampede* (which features a riveting cover of 4hero's anthem "Hold It

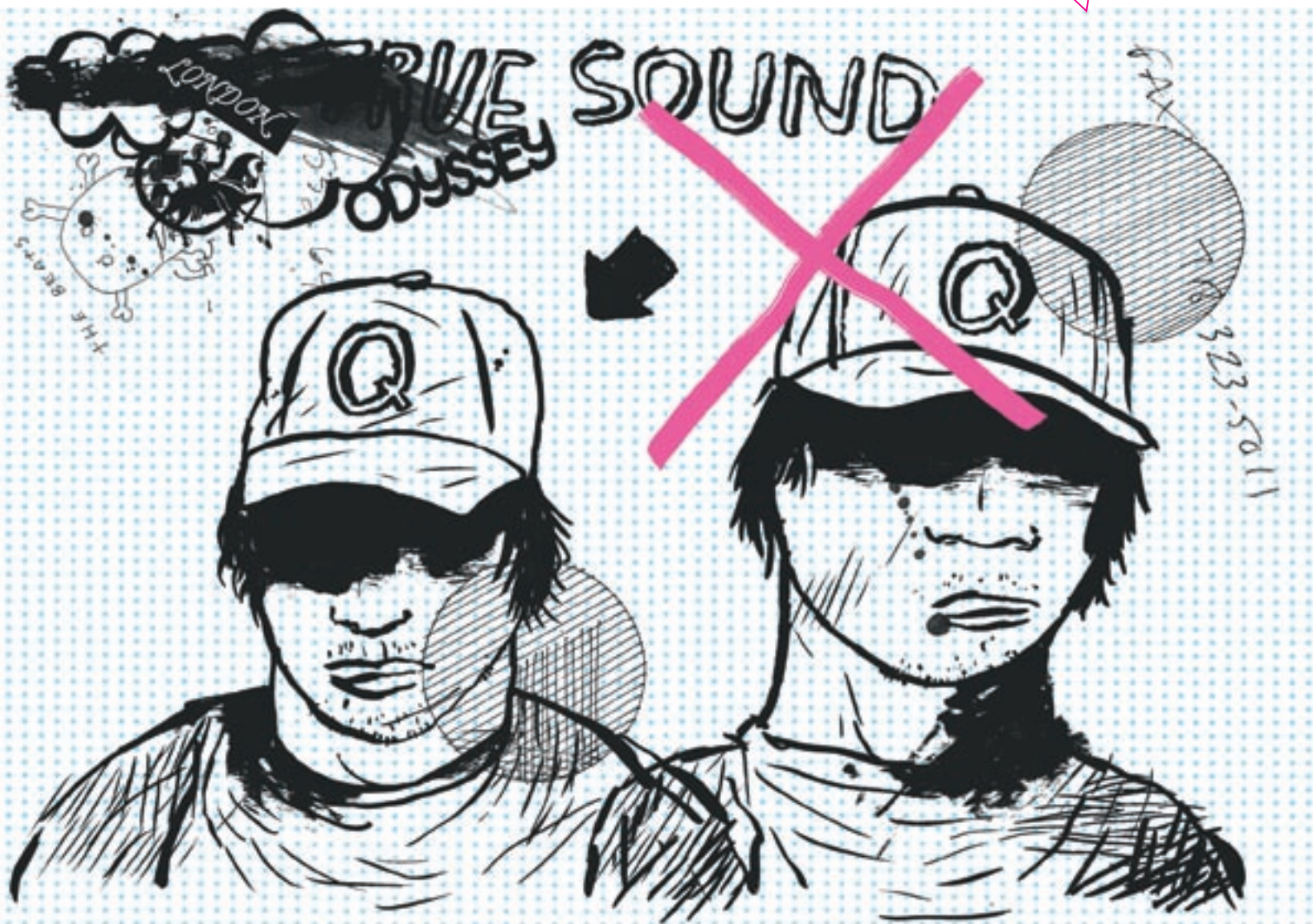
Down"). When not tending to Quantic duties, Holland found time to play "some very bad—in the bad sense" guitar in The Limp Twins, a vocal funk duo with Russ Porter.

Holland says it was his experience playing with The Limp Twins that galvanized a desire to break free from the restrictions of solo programming. As a result, the Quantic Soul Orchestra album was a geographically dispersed affair featuring many contributors. "The LP was written in my bedroom with occasional daytrips to record the drummer, and my sister popping in to play sax," Holland explains. "Alice Russell [of Bah Samba] recorded the vocals in her front room and sent them in the post." Despite the scattered production, *Stampede* feels like it was recorded by a live band during a sweaty studio session.

Of course, something still had to be done about those tour offers. Holland put together an 11-piece group and set out on an intense multi-continent schedule that was not without its share of antics. "Touring has been good fun," Holland reflects, "but the band members are complete drink/drug

enthusiasts! When we go abroad, it's hard to round them all up and get them back on the plane!" Making the switch from solo producer to bandleader carries unexpected risks; as Holland points out, "eleven plane tickets can be very costly to re-buy!"

www.quantico.org
www.tru-thoughts.co.uk



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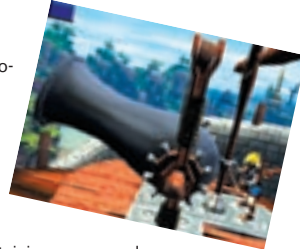
YOU DON'T KNOW JAK

Quannum's hip-hop upstarts **Lifesavas** (made up of rappers Vursatyl and Jumbo the Garbagegeman, and DJ Reverend Shine) are so into playing video games, that Shine jokes that when

he gets his first big record label advance he's not going to blow it on a shiny new Beemer—he's going to buy whatever new Playstation is out at the time. The crew's favorite games include *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Grand Theft Auto* and sports titles—mainly football and basketball games. Recently, we sat them down with the latest action/adventure offering from Sony Games, *Jak II* (Sony Playstation; \$39.95), the follow-up to the wildly popular *Jak*. In between A-B-A-B combinations, they sounded off on what makes this game so great. *Vivian Host*

XLR8R: What's the basic plot of the game?

Rev. Shine: You gotta save the world by beating people up, blowing them up, kicking them, punching them. It has its moments of being dark thematically. It turns from night to day but the enemies have a dark humor to them.



XLR8R: What's the best thing about it?

RS: The graphics are very good. It's a fun and entertaining game, and you have a wide range of motion.

Vursatyl: My favorite thing is this part that reminds me of *The Matrix*, when there's an explosion or something and you go through this portal and the whole screen sort of warps.

XLR8R: Tell us about the game play.

RS: The controls are pretty good; the hardest thing is controlling my hoverboard.

V: It's easy to control, but we're just getting the hang of it now. It's a tough game. Jumbo is on the real competitive end of it right now!



XLR8R: What's the music like?

RS: It's like something out of *The Hobbit*. It's kind of eerie.

XLR8R: If the main character, Jak, was a hip-hop artist, who would he be?

RS: LL Cool J. He's just kind of serious. He's a muscular dude who's not about the jokes.

V: Mikah Nine, because he's reckless, unpredictable and he's on a mission.

Jumbo: Gift of Gab, because he has this power where he can summon up anything at any time. As an MC, he's pretty quick to battle, but he can be blissful too.



www.quannum.com
www.playstation.com



Lifesavas (from left): DJ Reverend Shine, Jumbo the Garbagegeman and Vursatyl



OBSESSIONS: PEDRO

Under the alias **Pedro**, James Rutledge creates pretty, cottage electronica that draws upon influences as disparate as Albert Ayler, Fennesz, Arvo Part and Public Enemy. Rutledge claims the intent of his eponymous debut album, out now on Melodic records, was to take a hip-hop aesthetic and expand its range of references to include 20th-century classical, jazz, 2-step and early electronic music. *David Hemingway*

Pedro on The Yorkshire Ripper

"Peter Sutcliffe—The Yorkshire Ripper—was a serial killer from the north of England. He murdered 13 women in the late '70s. I became 'interested' in him when I moved to the area. I had studied English at university but hadn't read any crime literature, so I tried to read all the classic crime writing. I discovered an author called Gordon Burn. He also writes fiction but his book on the Yorkshire Ripper, *Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son*, was amazing. It's not sensational or trashy in any way. The Yorkshire Ripper prompted a lot of great journalism that captured Yorkshire's mood (dim, orange street-lamps, rolling surroundings, dirty stone houses). People, especially women, were terrified of leaving their houses in the five or six years leading up to his arrest. One man eluded the police and brought a county to a standstill. That was terrible but also fascinating. I'm not interested in crime in a rubbernecking way. It's important to try and understand why these atrocities happen. There is also the distinct possibility that he had an accomplice. Then there were the hoax tapes, sent to the police, which send shivers down my spine every time I hear them. I just read everything I see about the case. People will talk about murderers in conversation and I will mutter weird facts, but everyone knows I'm not a psycho. I think..."



The Yorkshire Ripper

www.melodic.co.uk



ASK ME about the adidas Top Ten, and I'LL TELL YOU these real classics became legendary the moment they were born back in '77. Worn by the top ten players in the game, they were granted four patents and instant greatness. So step back, and step into the shoes that were a legend then, and are a legend now.





BERLIN'S TECHNO POWERHOUSE RECONCILES FUTURE AND PAST THROUGH HER EXPRESSIVE CLICKS 'N' CUTS.

For someone who makes such unabashedly futuristic music, Ellen Allien sure has a strong nostalgic streak. "I try to have my past in my heart, my home, my childhood, [and] my family because they show me where I come from," she explains. "I travel a lot, I run this label, I get a lot of information, music. I always need to come back a little bit to my past, to my weird standing as a person, as a human. Sometimes I'm afraid about the future."

Though she can't be faulted for such attachments, it's almost hard to grasp that such a seasoned veteran of electronic music could possess such vulnerability. That

is, until one listens closely to Allien's music. Despite her status as a top Berlin-based DJ (female, yes, but what defines her is a penchant for razor-sharp techno), a label head with a unique vision (her BPitch Control imprint is lauded worldwide by everyone from Felix da Housecat to Thom Yorke of Radiohead), and an established knob-twiddler with a keen ear for futuristic electronics, Allien has an unexpectedly sentimental take on human existence—one that permeates each track on *Berlinette*, her surprisingly touching follow-up to 2001's *Statkindt*. "It's all about songs," she stresses. "It's very emotional because the vocals are there, and I talk about love. I talk about the strange world in which we live."

From her days as an acid house kid in late-'80s London to her position as a party promoter and in-demand DJ in mid-'90s

Berlin, and finally to her current perch atop the heap of experimental and minimal techno producers in Europe, Allien still retains a distinctive sense of emotional accessibility in her music, even if it that tenderness is carefully wrapped with layers of clicks, whirls, subtle breaks and, at times, throbbing basslines and intense drum kicks. Buried beneath her signature high-gloss minimalism and crisp android funk is a warm, beating heart heavy with anticipation and apprehension.

"The past is the key to your luck," she asserts. "The future is so bad, everything is broken, the wars—so much shit that happens in the world. As a human you have to live with this. I think you understand what I mean, no?"

www.bpitchcontrol.de



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SOMETHING ON THE SIDE

This summer was totally about being naked but that's, like, so over for fall.

When the leaves start falling, fashion will be all about the accessories. Slap on the t-shirt and jeans that are laying on the floor night before, hit those with some Febreze, and add a hot purse or some good shoes. Bam! Ready for anything. *Compiled by Vivian Host, Melanie Samarasinghe and David Weissberg*



SWEET FEET They're a little bit ballet, they're a little bit rock 'n' roll. The new "Wizard" slip-ons (\$58) from NYC's M.O.D. shoe company, all shooting stars and stylish detailing, are guaranteed to flirt with

passers-by from underneath your pant leg. Fall styles come in the best colors: black stars on olive, pink stars on brown, and navy stars on denim. Snap them up at Mini Mini Market in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Uncle Jers in Los Angeles, and Mint in San Diego.



ONE WOMAN ARMY Triple 5 Soul's fall bags mix military touches with unlikely suspects such as satin and corduroy, making it possible to look at once rugged and ladylike at the canteen. The Canvas Tote (\$72) is done up in olive and a fierce camouflage. As always—T5 caters to the utilitarian in you with numerous snaps to fidget with on the subway and pockets in which to keep your mace.

www.triple5soul.com



www.french-kitty.com

PANTY RAID Cheaper than a French maid's outfit (and much more subtle) come these skivvies from French Kitty. Gussied up in black satin and cream-colored lace, with appliqué Siamese cats purring from around the edges, this bra (\$30) and panties (\$16) will make even the staunchest Dickies wearer feel like a little fucking princess.



BELLE JOUR It's a sack! No, you twat, it's a purse! No, it's a hamster carrying case! San Francisco outfitters Cybelle serve up this delectable bag (\$45), lined in cotton-candy pink satin and emblazoned with cherry blossoms to remind you of spring, even on those dreary fall days.

www.cybellegear.com



OFF THE CHAIN Made With Love's jewelry line (from \$20-\$65) takes inspiration from Wham! and *Teen Beat* as it roller skates right through the middle of the 1980s. Bubbly heart and star charms, lengths of plastic chain, and childhood motifs combine to form necklaces, bracelets, earrings and matching sets that say, "I have a childlike sense of whimsy but I also carry a switchblade." Baubles are available at MK in New York and X-Girl in Los Angeles.



BORN FREE Surfer, SF local, video artist and all-around life-of-the-party Jimmy Kaufman brings together 100 artists from Brooklyn, Oakland and many points beyond to visually answer the question, "What does freedom look like?" The result is *The Freedom Book: Volume 1* (\$19.95; softcover, Goohoo Books), a nifty, 208-page, palm-sized tome providing hours of stimulation for the neo-cortex. The little black book (literally) plays like a

who's-who of the San Francisco underground art world—including pieces by David Choe, Jeremy Fish and Tiffany Bozic—but includes a fair few surprises, and eye candy from known names like Dez Einswell, Futura and Doze Green. *Vivian Host*

Pictured below are Freedom Book works by Forrealists (left) and Matt Dong. www.goohoo.com

Photos by Sam Care

:03



A slouched, depressed guy is at the edge of a roof.

SFX: City sounds
Music: Desperate tones

:19



He smiles and feels better.

:06



He steps off. As he falls, he notices his slumped posture reflected in the window.

SFX: Wind noise

:24



Music: Horn stab

:12



He straightens himself up to a good posture.

:27



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**WARP'S NEW GENERATION PROVOCA-
TEUR REVELS IN AMBIGUITY.**

Chris Clark's corruption of rave, techno and "academic music" is borne out of an aesthetic of home-studio experimentation that prompts the Birmingham, UK-based musician to "put things through things, record these things and put them through other things which then became completely different things."

Clark's first album, *Clarence Park*, appropriated the horror of Aphex Twin's "Come To Daddy" as its sonic and emotional blueprint, but the musician also admits that his intention was to apply *Slanted and Enchanted*-era Pavement's loose dynamic to the electronic experiments of Autechre and Squarepusher. The follow-up, *Empty the Bones of You*, accentuates the ambiguity of Clark's debut—it's often unclear whether he is trying to evoke apprehension

or affection in his frequently brutal, frequently pretty recordings.

Chris Clark has said in previous interviews that his music comes from "internal struggles within myself." "Did I say that? That's really wanky," he asserts. "But, it's kind of true. You make music for yourself mainly through boredom, through wanting to make a little problem and solve it."

This human Rubik's Cube also says that music is a necessary evil. "If I don't do it, I get quite twitchy," Clark avers. "In the past, if I haven't made music because I've been away or on holiday, I have got a bit depressed. Then again, if I do it too much, that happens as well. If you're writing tracks for fourteen hours a day, it's quite hard to talk."

"Holiday Is Brutality," off his forthcoming album, came out of such a necessity to create tracks. "I had to take a few days off writing because I was going to see my gran

in Germany," Clark explains. "It was sort of a holiday, but not really much of one because she was quite unwell. I wanted to see her but ... " His voice trails off, before he ratchets back to attention. "It's just a snappy title."

On many tracks—such as "Early Moss," "Betty" or "Slow Spines"—Clark rejects specific themes or subject matter. "I'll leave that to songwriters," he says. "I'm not a songwriter. Some of my stuff has got a 'song' form but what I find so great about music without words is that it's completely non-specific. Often I'll think my tracks are completely uplifting, but others will think they're dark and frightening. I just love the fact that you can really spin things out and end somewhere different. That's the joy of it."

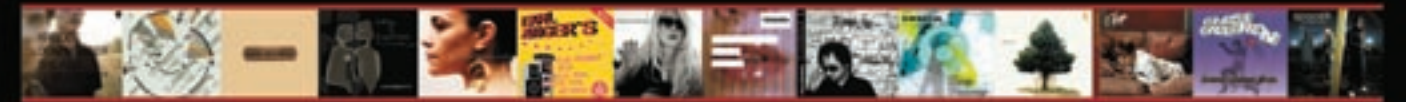
Empty the Bones of You is released in September on Warp Records. www.warprecords.com



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NIAMH AHEAM (Dublin, Ireland)

How many times have you been to Sonar?

One.

What have you enjoyed the most?

Schneider TM, Pole with Fat Jon, and I've seen a lot of the multimedia and cinema stuff which I've really enjoyed a lot.



PETER HARTON & LOUISE DROST

(Copenhagen, Denmark)

How many times have you been to Sonar?

It's our first.

What have you enjoyed the most?

Datarock from Norway.



ESTELLA PERNI & GEMMA MACHA

(Barcelona, Spain)

How many times have you been to Sonar?

Seven!

What have you enjoyed the most?

Richie Hawtin.



JILL HERRERA (26, promotions at Cycling 74, San Francisco, CA)

What was your favorite performance at MUTEK?

I loved Monolake, especially his facial expressions when he plays—he gets all excited.

What do you like most about Montreal?

[Its] überfashion. The dudes dress up here.



EMILE DENICHAUD (23, unemployed animator, Montreal, QC)

What was your favorite performance at MUTEK?

Coil for their emotional content and Richie Hawtin for his danceability.

What do you like most about Montreal?

It's not Toronto.



VANESSA MOORE (23, fashion designer, Montreal, QC)

What was your favorite performance at MUTEK?

Richie Hawtin. He was really good.

What do you like most about Montreal?

The people and the city—it's inspiring.

ON THE SPOT: SONAR

With a bang and a slow, satisfied groan, **Sonar** celebrated its tenth birthday with three days and nights of music and madness in Barcelona. The daytime component was filled with the usual assortment of beats, hiss and hands in the air, as merry-makers sprawled on Astroturf, swigged *clara* (Spain's genius concoction of beer and lemonade) and took in sets ranging from Pita's sublime spray to Pulse Programming's unabashedly giddy house. Miss Kittin rocked a standing-room only crowd, and Akufen led the MUTEK contingent in teaching Europe how they do in Montreal.

Matthew Herbert's Big Band kicked off the nighttime events with two emotional sessions that had the crowd dancing in the aisles of the staid Auditori Nacional. The next two nights reminded international crowds that Spaniards know how to rave, with Jeff Mills and Richie Hawtin concocting techno explosions and T.Raumschmiere and Soft Pink Truth each offering their vision of heavy metal. Some 22,000 people braved the final night, which Laurent Garnier closed with a surprise appearance from Bugge Wesseltoft. Not long after, the skies opened up and washed it all away. *Philip Sherburne*

ON THE SPOT: MUTEK

MUTEK sounds like it could be the name of some new on-line stock investment company, and that nerdy comparison might not be too off-base. In its fourth year, the Canadian festival is the world's premier gathering of experimental electronic musicians. But despite its intensely focused mission, this year's performers presented a diverse array of interpretations of MUTEK's minimal techno theme, from T. Raumschmiere's slamdancing laptop grind to Thomas Koner's delicately processed environmental samples. There were more

women in the mix in 2003 (Brooklyn's Magda and Japan's Tujiko Noriko received rapturous ovations), lest you envision the event as a gaggle of fashion-challenged dudes exchanging notes on rare Autechre 7"'. Over four days, girls and boys shook it to Richie Hawtin and Señor Coconut and were mesmerized by Pole featuring Fat Jon and the festival's eight-artist laptop jam-session finale. We asked this year's attendees what made MUTEK sizzle. *Tomas Palermo*



MARTIJN COMES (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) & **SPONGY** (Athens, Greece)

How many times have you been to Sonar?

It's our first time.

What have you enjoyed the most?

Tujiko Noriko was great. We really liked Pita and Tina Frank and Björk, of course.



MICOLINE SILLEHOVED (Copenhagen, Denmark)

How many times have you been to Sonar?

First time.

What have you enjoyed the most?

Jamie Lidell was terrific.



NOZE (Nagoya, Japan)

How many times have you been to Sonar?

It's my first.

What have you enjoyed the most?

Pita.



DAVID DAY (28, music publicist at Forced Exposure, Somerville, MA)

What was your favorite performance at MUTEK?

At the end of Luciano's set, when he brought on the musicians from Señor Coconut, and hearing [Mego artist] Florian Hecker ask my friend Billy to go to the strip club.

What do you like most about Montreal? People are very friendly—I've had nothing but good conversations.



IHU ANYANWU (30, *Repellent* magazine publisher/singer, Jersey City, New Jersey)

What was your favorite performance at MUTEK?

The performance that struck me the most was Tujiko Noriko. It was like classical music, pop and digital abstraction—it was heaven.

What do you like most about Montreal? The people are so friendly, and it's like Disneyland for people on the fringe of culture. It's a hotbed, a hotspot.



RENATO DEL VALLE (28, photographer/music producer, Santiago, Chile)

What was your favorite performance at MUTEK?

I really liked Magda, Señor Coconut and Luciano.

What do you like most about Montreal?

Seems to be a city that's really calm and the people are really amazing. They're quite similar to the Chilean people—very open-minded and happy.

SWISH'ED AT BIRTH

Swish NYC's Tony Chan and Bill McMullen always dug a little bit deeper in the reference crate than your average b-boy. Avoiding such dead-end shafts as breakdancing or bad graffiti logos, they've gone straight to

the roots and unearthed these mutually inclusive gems of old-school New York City and hip-hop, both available on their website. *David J Weissberg*
www.swishnyc.com

KING OF NEW YORK DOLL It's a sad fact that the only thing distressed about New York these days is the furniture—even mobster chronicles such as *The Sopranos* seem to have all of the edge of a minivan on its way to soccer practice. Well, my friend, the time for your freakin' cryin and whatnot is at an end. Simply prop up Frank White from *King of New York* (Christopher Walken in fine form mixing one part Gordon Gecko with one part Tony Montana) in your living room, and relive such magic movie moments as that time when Frank says, "Hey you" and blows David Caruso's head clean off. Included is a gun that actually cocks back so you can pretend to take some dumb pedestrian hostage on an actual graffiti-filled subway (you'll have to imagine that last part).



MPC DRUM MACHINE RING Is your lifestyle these days all bling and no content? Then wear your hip-hop credentials with pride with an MPC2000 ring. Oft over-shadowed by the 808, the MPC is truly the producer's gear of choice, as whole songs, not just beats, can be created on this versatile little workhorse (the machine, not the ring). It's limited to 50 and comes in its own cool little crafty box. Rick Rubin-sized gut not included.



FANTASY LAND

Unlike, say, trance or breaks, Detroit techno comes packed snugly with its own visual schematics. More often than not, Motor City record sleeves riff on the realms of science fiction and fantasy. The look is due in large part to the work of Detroitier Abdul Qadim Haqq, whose images (ranging from digital art inspired by the ancient pyramids to decidedly more modern cartoon paintings) have cemented the world's perception of Underground Resistance and Red Planet, two notoriously camera-shy labels. At the month-long installation of *Interstellar Transmissions* (which runs through October 26 at Alhambra, California's Crewest Store and Art Gallery), Haqq's work is joined by that of California-based photographer Gustavo Alberto Garcia Vaca, whose techno-inspired deep space light photography graces sleeves on the Los Hermanos, Metroplex and Axis imprints. Both artists give props to enduring record sleeve designers such as Shusei Nagaoka (Earth, Wind & Fire) and Tadanori Yokoo (Miles Davis, Santana, Pharoah Sanders) and share a common interest in mystical spirituality as they continue on their quest to immortalize tech-no with the reverence it deserves. *Tamara Palmer*

www.chamanvision.com
www.thirdearthgraphics.com



Recent work by Abdul Qadim Haqq

SPIN CYCLE UK dance music rag *Muzik Magazine* shut down in early July, following a final issue featuring a P Diddy cover • Everything's coming up indie: *Nobody's* second album for *Ubiquity*, *Pacific Drift: Western Water Music Vol. 1*, will feature collaborations with Ikey of *Mars Volta*, *Dntel*, *Languis* and members of *Beachwood Sparks*. Full of trippy water themes, the record will be out on September 9 • Following *Medicine's* dreamy pop come-back, *The Mechanical Forces of Love*, Astralwerks drops the Stateside debut of mash-up artist *Richard X* this month • German minimal techno machine *Onitor* drops four new records—12-inches from *Bjoern Stolpman*, *Hagedorn*, and *Mike Shannon* (under his Sid Dithers pseudonym), and a full-length CD starring *Tomas Jirku* and *Robin Judge* • "The Reflex," redux? Thrilling white-slack and fashion mullet wearers everywhere, *Duran Duran* has reunited • Legendary Sheffield group *The Designers Republic* flew south for the summer, melding minds with Latin America's top designers in Quito, *Ecuador* at a conference that was held in early July • Big K: Broken beat fans, buck up. *Kaidi Tatham* (alias Agent K) will release his debut, *Feed the Cat*, on *Giant Step* this fall • The *Light In the Attic* label gears up this month to release the back catalog of late-'60s pop outfit *Free Design*, who have influenced artists from Stereolab to Cut Chemist. Re-releases of *Kites Are Fun* and *Heaven/Earth* will include remixes by *PB Wolf* and *Belle & Sebastian*, along with liner notes from *Cornelius* • Valjejo's finest rapper, E-40, recently dropped a new album, *Breaking News*, and his long-awaited slang dictionary, *E-40's Book of Slang Vol. 1* (Murder Dog). We'll finally have the chance to properly incorporate words like "ballatician" and "pimp skillet" into our vocal • Speaking of slang: the *Oxford English Dictionary* inaugurated "bling bling," coined by rapper *BG*, into its pages • Swing on: *Matthew Herbert* drops his long-awaited live big-band album, *Goodbye Swingtime*, in early September • Party raid: *O! Dirty Bastard* has recently unveiled his new name, *Dirt McGirt*, with a line of hip-hop underwear under the same moniker. Insert joke here • Hip-hop—it don't stop: Fall finds new joints dropping from the *Neptunes*, *Prozack* of Foreign Legion, *Baby Blak* and poetess *Ursula Rucker*. Also look for *Kinkynasti*, the new project from Cincinnati mic physician *Fat Jon's* group *Five Deez* • Sing it back: London's *Slip 'N' Slide* records are releasing a series of records compiling both classic and new-school house a capellas • UK garage remixers extraordinaire *DND* will be redoing tracks from *Billy Crawford*, *Liberty X*, and *Missy Elliott* • Jazz label *Blue Note* heps a whole new generation of cats with forthcoming projects from *Madlib*, *Soulive* and *DJ Smash* • Earlier this summer, *Altoids* revealed two graffiti walls of fame, featuring paint from famed writers including *Rebel*, *Ces*, *Shie*, *Edec* and more. The walls still stand: head out to *Williamsburg* in Brooklyn (corner of Bedford and N. 4th St.) or *Miami's Wynwood District* (corner of NW 24th St. and NW 6th Ave.) • Rumor has it *Marumari* is working on a new album inspired by "lite rock" • When the going gets tough, the tough open galleries: Two new art spaces recently opened in San Francisco. The *Future Primitive flagship* featured the *Style Wars* re-release premier, and will present upcoming shows from *Kid Koala* and underground stars. *Rx Gallery* presents artists whose work is informed by electronic and digital technology • Cuter than a parka-clad boy from the L.E.S.: *Theblowup* mixes art, culture, and fashion into one tidy little must-have package. Chiggedy-check it at www.theblowup.com • MIT grads have started an indie alternative to iTunes; check www.digizaar.com •



from left: E-Feezy Fonzearezy a.k.a. E-40, O! Dirty Bastard's infamous grill, Nick Rhodes of Duran Duran, *Muzik Magazine's* final cover, Marumari at his "lite rock" wedding, MUCK paints for Altoids

THIS SUMMER, LOOKS CAN KILL



VOL 1



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Fannypack



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 This is Jessibel, Belinda why you made my boobs bigger than the other. I am the sexy one ooo keep that in mind...

I AM MATT. FANNYPACK IS AN IMPORTANT GROUP BECAUSE WE REALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUES. BELINDAS MOM IS DIVORCED HOLLA!
 BELIEVE IT OR NOT, FANCYS I AM CAT NOT HERE. WHERE COULD HE BE?
 BELIEVE IT OR NOT HES NOT HOME I AM MATT. DID I MENTION THAT I AM MATT?

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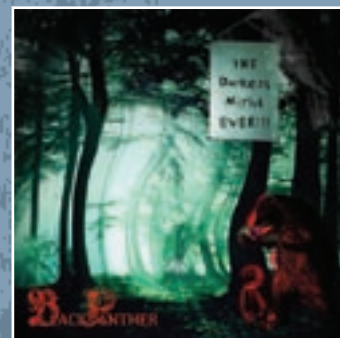
FANCY
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BEAT KIDS
Open Rhythm System
 A mixture of avant garde and nu jazz broken beat and 70's funk twisted through an MPC with a twist of Portishead and a little early 90's golden age hip hop.



BLACK PANTHER
The Darkest Night Ever
 A conceptual trip into the dark depths of madness, with Black Panther serving as ring leader for guests Stic Jean Grae Murs, and many more.



CAGE
Weather Proof
 After opening the flood gates with his solo debut Movies For The Blind, the underground's most mysterious emcee returns with his latest chapter, Weatherproof. Included with extra enhanced footage this nine song gem features production from Rjd2, Reef (50 cent), J-Zone, and Mighty Mi.



CAN
Out Of Reach
 Previously one of the most mysterious and hard to get of all the bands albums. Features all seven of the original tracks, completely remastered with original artwork and very extensive liner notes.

RHYME OF THE ANCIENT MANNER



DEFARI
Odds & Evens
 The long awaited follow-up from Likwit Crew MC Defari. Features Tha Liks, Dilated Peoples, & Phil Da Agony. Executive producers: Evidence & E-Swift. A westcoast banger!



7 HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE
Various Artists
 A seminal collection from indie hip hop cornerstone, Seven Heads. Rare and new cyst from the 7H family, featuring J-Live, Asheru, Djinji Brown, Richy Pitch, El Da Sensei, Audessey, Soulive and Talib Kweli.

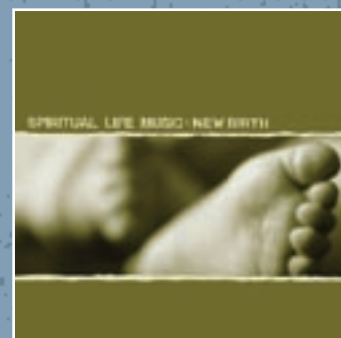


BEST OF BEYOND REAL RECORDINGS
Various Artists
 From DJ Spinn's label comes this supreme collection, featuring Talib Kweli, Mos Def, Pharoahe Monch, Jigmastas, Akil, Basement Khemists, Sadat X, a certain Mr. Shady & more!



SOUNDS UNDER NEW YORK
Various Artists
 David Sambo and Rus Deep are the spin-kings of the New York underground - literally. The duo are the only DJs licensed to play on the subway. Judging by the reception each of these tunes received when played out to the crowds, this is underground dance music just bursting to cross over!

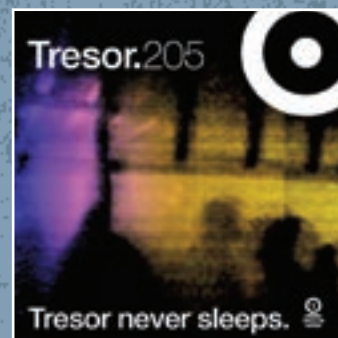
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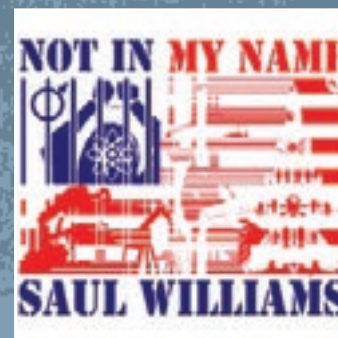
SPIRITUAL LIFE MUSIC VOL 3
Various Artists
 This compilation strives to give you an opportunity to love yourself again and again, with Jeff Mills on magic carpet, Joe Claussell on effects, Nitin Sawhney doing the whirling dervish and Francois K. on spoons.



STATE OF THE WORLD
Various Artists
 Tableturn's insightful mix cd compilation features all original tracks from some of the most established and respected artists in the independent hip hop scene: Cannibal Ox, Slug, Invisible, J Live, Rob Swift, Total Eclipse (X-Ecutoners) and more.



TRESOR NEVER SLEEPS
Various Artists
 Hot New compilation from Tresor. Featuring exclusive CD tracks/mixes from Jeff Mills, Chester Beatty, British Murder Boys, and more.



SAUL WILLIAMS
Not In My Name
 A pledge of resistance on behalf of the anti-war movement from one of the most exciting and important voices in hip-hop. Featuring remixes from the electronic duo Coldcut and DJ Spooky.

The skate industry has birthed some of the last two decades' most memorable looks, from asymmetrical hair a la Tony Hawk to checkered Vans to the canonized Bones Brigade and Vision Street Wear logos. While driving fashion, skaters have also influenced and been influenced by music, with Corey Duffel and Jamie Thomas driving the emo/punk look forward, Chad Muska making tunes with Flavor Flav and hip-hop superstars rocking DC Shoes. As skate design and fashion continue to push mainstream fashion forward, we spoke to six of the industry's most cutting-edge about a few of their favorite things. *Vivian Host*

SKATE STYLE: BOARD CERTIFIED



ELI GESNER CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF ZOO YORK

What is your favorite skate fashion trend of the last 20 years?

Man, that's a tough one. Checkered Vans? Bad Boy Club all-over pattern berets? Knee pads over your ankles? Jams? Fingerless leather gloves? Long sleeve t-shirts with repeat logo prints down the arms? Jimmy Z Velcro pants? Dunks? Stüssy shirts? Cut-up Hosoi-style t-shirts? Asymmetrical haircuts that cover half your face? Vato LA gang-style flannel button-down shirts? Stickers on clothes? Duct tape as a garment? Chain wallets? Champion sweatshirts? Vision Street Wear? Mock neck long-sleeve shirts? Pegged khaki pants? Half Cabs? Logo hoodies? Ready-to-order garbage cut-and-sew clothing that you slap your embroidered logo on? Baggy jeans? DC Shoes? Showing up to skate spots in head-to-toe bling-bling crispy Polo gear with Timbo boots on and killing it on someone else's borrowed board? Ripped-up jeans? Skin-tight jeans? Trucker hats? Dunks? Checkered Vans? Um... Yes!

What skater do you think has been the most influential fashion-wise and why?

In the '80s, probably [Christian] Hosoi. Early '90s? I'm a have to say Matt Hensley. Come on! Cargo pants and chain wallets? People made fortunes off that look and Mr. Hensley got no credit! Late '90s? Probably Chad Muska for making hip-hop the cool thing to do in skateboarding. Nowadays? Probably Grecco. That whole over-the-top 'fuck you' punk rock look is from him. I remember just looking at him at a

trade show a few years back and saying to myself 'Fuck. That kid looks like he just stepped out of CBGB's circa 1983! He had it down! Absolutely perfect and genuine. I think he fucks Vivian Westwood.

Outside of skateboarding, what designers/artists are you influenced by?

The short list is...everything. New York City. My friends. Alajandro Jodorowsky, Winsor McCay, Pushead, Natas Kaupas, Chris Cunningham, American Museum of Natural History, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Rockin' Jellybean, Matthew Barney, Spielberg, Cronenberg, The Gonz, surfing, Freemasons, Terry Gilliam, Reas, Syd Mead, etc...

How is East Coast skate fashion different from West Coast skate fashion?

Just for the record, I HATE fashion. Fashion is utterly transient and, by its very definition, depthless. It's also probably the single most environmentally destructive industry in the world. Having said that, skate fashion has more to do with what kind of music culture you want to associate yourself with than what coast you come from. Hip-hop skaters in NYC and L.A. dress pretty similar. Rock 'n' roll skaters the same. I've always thought that any real discrepancy comes from the fact that the East-NYC, more specifically—is very international. And the seasons actually change, which means you always need to be attending to your closet. I see people wearing bubble goose down jackets in LA in the winter and it's only 50 degrees out!

www.zooyork.com



Decks by Zoo York: Vivian (left) and Dirty Dog (\$44.95)



ANDY JENKINS DESIGNER FOR GIRL SKATEBOARDS

Who was the first skater you were ever really into and why?

Neil Blender. Mark Gonzales. Natas Kaupas. Lance Mountain. Then a little later on, Tod Swank. These guys were the real deal, seemingly unaffected by hype and glitz and the rock 'n' roll high life era of skating in the mid-'80s. They were down-to-earth and creative beyond words... a sort of creativity I myself had not been exposed to before them. Very influential.

What kind of music do you listen to most often?

Right now I have a radio show on: "Morning Becomes Eclectic" on KCRW in LA. Nick Harcourt plays all kinds of good stuff. Sometimes it gets a little lopsided, but overall it really is eclectic. Everything from Nina Simone to the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. They also have live "in studio" shows almost every morning. I've recorded some great interviews and performances from that show over the years—namely Beck, Tom Waits, Mike Watt, and the Flaming Lips.

How does living in Los Angeles influence you?

I suppose it's a big piece of who I am. I mean, I'm submersed in this huge manmade forest with chaotic rivers flowing every which direction. The other day I had this thought that driving on the streets, avenues and freeways of Los Angeles is like being thrown, or jumping, into a raging river, then struggling to stay head-up during a thrashing all the way to your destination. There are all kinds of things around you getting beat down and swallowing water. Some of these folks panic, some feign confidence when they know damn well they are on the edge of drowning just like you are. Others are going down, sinking to the bottom and trying to drag you with them. Sounds fatalistic, huh? Hmmm, must be my mood this week, because I really do love it here.

Do skaters make good designers (and why)?

I'm not too sure this is true, but skating does have an eye-opening quality about it. It's almost a cliché at this point with all the exposure it's getting—we've all heard and said it so many times. The more people find out about it the more it's being watered down. Lots of grabbers on. It's all too much at this point. At times I feel like sinking back into the wallpaper.

What skater do you think has been the most influential fashion-wise and why?

Garry Street Davis! Remember that cool skeleton suit he used to skate around in?! That was the shit. Neil Blender's homemade t-shirt sleeve headbands were a big breakthrough fashion wise. These days, I just look to Eric Koston for my fashion tips.

www.girlskateboards.com



JACOB SAWYER
EMPLOYEE/TEAM MEMBER, SLAM CITY SKATES, LONDON

What do you listen to in the store?

When I'm in the store, I usually put on Morrissey, Bonnie Prince Billy, or 50 Cent. We listen to a lot of 50 Cent.

What sells the best in the store?

We sell a lot of UK brands. We stock Silas, so that goes quick. Also the Slam City Skates t-shirts (which are only available here), Blueprint decks and Tonite t-shirts and stuff by Heroin.

Who was the first skater you were ever really into and why?

This kid from my neighborhood when I was growing up named Neal. But of the big name skaters, it was Ray Barbee.

What company's board graphics have had the most influence on you?

Girl Skateboards and Alien Workshop.

What is your favorite skate fashion of the last 20 years?

I don't know, but I'll tell you what I don't like: the baggy pants and visors that everyone in the mainstream thinks is skate fashion.

www.slamcity.com



Damon Way (left) with his brother, DC Skater Danny Way

DAMON WAY
VICE PRESIDENT OF DC SHOES

What year did you start DC?

We started the brand in 1994 and had product into the market place in 1995.

What skater do you think has been the most influential fashion-wise and why?

I would say Jamie Thomas and Tony Trujillo are driving the rocker side and Stevie Williams the hip-hop side.

What kind of music do you listen to most often when you're working?

I listen to anything from Spacemen3 to Kraftwerk to the Creation to Slowdive to Joy Division to the Rapture. I find myself immersed in the world of indie rock most of the time.

What's the first thing you owned that you wore out from wearing it so much?

I am really into jackets and jeans for some reason—so as long as the quality is good

and the styling is somewhat timeless I will wear them until they retire themselves. I am also really fond of '60s Mod culture, so when I find something like leather Beatle boots, which are hard to find, I will wear them until the soles fall off.

What board graphics designer or company has had the most influence on you?

I do not think that I am very influenced by board graphics, but if I were I would have to say that Alien Workshop has had the most progressive, definitive and consistent board graphics for the last years. As far as new brands, I really like Popwar. It is graphically the most refreshing thing I have seen from a skateboard company in years.

What is the biggest influence that skate fashion has had on the mainstream?

This is a tough one because it is hard to identify where exactly the trends are starting. As far as skateboarding there has always been an exchange of influence between its culture and the music world. It is hard to say who is driving whom these days.

www.dcskates.com



(top): Tonite t-shirt from Slam City (£29.95); (bottom, from left): DC Shoes' Agents of Change book (\$25.95), Phil Frost artist shoe (\$68.95), Kinsey artist shoe (\$76.95)



AKA: Girl Skater DVD featuring trick tips by Lauren Mollica (Gallaz; \$19.95) www.girlskater.com

LAUREN MOLLIKA SKATES FOR ROOKIE AND GALLAZ

Who was the first skater you were ever really into and why?

Mike Vallely. He was from Jersey so I'd see him around Jersey skating when I was little and I thought he was cool.

What was the first board you skated?

It was from Toys R Us, some girly looking thing with flowers on it. I was nine or ten and my grandma bought it for me. After that, I just used to pick boards out for

the graphics. I always liked Vision boards and I used to skate old Gonz boards.

What's your favorite skate fashion of the last 20 years?

'80s Vision Street Wear stuff, especially the shoes. I like tailslides and flippy type tricks: 360 flips, nollies, switch heel flips.

Right now, what's your favorite CD in the player?

Umm...everything. Danzig, Misfits.

What's your favorite thing in your closet?

I don't have a house right now, but I guess my records or my bike.

What's the first thing you owned that you just wore out from wearing it so much?

My denim jacket with a Metallica back patch. I got it when I was like 10 and I still have it and I still wear it. It's really small, too.

www.rookieskateboards.com
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Rick (left) and Buddy

RICK CHARNOSKI AND COAN "BUDDY" NICHOLS DIRECTORS OF SKATE FILMS FRUIT OF THE VINE AND NORTHWEST

Who was the first skater you were ever really into?

Rick: Probably Duane Peters. I grew up in rural Pennsylvania. When I first started skating in the early '80s, skateboarding to anyone who wasn't in California might as well have been a movie. You'd see these magazines and it was like otherworldly—skaters were like movie stars. They were heroes. You'd see all these slick guys all sponsored and wearing tight clothes, and Peters was the punk rock guy. There was always pictures of him shaving his head and stories about him being a hard-ass. As a kid, that's what I was attracted to.

Buddy: I liked the guys around my area who were big like this guy Fred Smith who rode for Alva, he was the punk guy who was really cool, and Duane Peters.

What kind of music do you find yourself listening to most often on the road?

Rick: Buddy usually brings all the CDs and his collection probably doesn't stray too far from Black Sabbath and Motorhead and that kind of stuff. Thin Lizzy.

Buddy: Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. They would get me stoked to go skate a pool.

Outside of skateboarding, what influences your films?

Rick: Anybody who is doing stuff for themselves. Most people are pretty lazy and people that have the initiative to take an idea or pursue something they're into—it could be making a cool tomato garden in their backyard or fixing their car—influence me. People place too much emphasis on being comfortable. People that are out there doing shit for themselves are the ones who are making a difference.

What board graphics or board company has had the most influence on you?

Rick: Back in the day, Zorlac skateboards was my favorite. They had cool graphics and they had cool skaters—they were the best back in the day. It was all skulls,

blood, flames, fire. Heavy stuff. Pushead, a famous punk rock artist, used to do all the graphics.

Buddy: My friend's board company from Oregon called M&M Skateboards—they make their own skateboards and sell them in their basement. That, to me, is the balls-out spirit that I'm into. They do it on their own and maybe it's not as tech, or whatever, but all these other companies, the people that run them don't even skate and I think that's kind of lame. I like any company that's owned by skaters and where the money that's generated from the skateboards goes in the skaters' pockets.

If you could have anyone in the world score your next skate film who would it be and what would the movie be about?

Rick: Jesus, that's heavy. Probably John Coltrane, and I don't know what it would be about.

Buddy: The next project that Rick and I are talking about doing is a trip down to Australia and New Zealand, so that's probably what it would be about. Honestly, we would probably find someone on the road that we really connected with and who was doing some freaky kind of music we never even thought about.



Above: Rick and Buddy's DVDs Fruit of the Vine and Northwest (Plexifilm/NCP Films; \$24.95); www.plexifilm.com

Jesus shaves



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MELDING A LEFTFIELD MUSICAL PALETTE WITH POP'S KITSCH AND PERSONALITY, SAN FRANCISCO'S TIGERBEATS LABEL IS CHURNING OUT NEXT-LEVEL ELECTRONIC PUNK SUPERSTARS FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY TEEN SPIRIT. WE PINNED DOWN FOUNDER KID606, NUMBERS, AND SIX MORE OF THE LABEL'S INTERNATIONAL CONSCRIPTS TO TALK TO US ABOUT WHY THE FUTURE IS SO MUCH MORE EXCITING THAN THE PAST.

DEATH 2 RETRO

DYSFUNCTION JUNCTION

NUMBERS ASKS, "WHAT'S YOUR FUNCTION?"

WORDS VINN HOST IMAGES CHRIS WOODCOCK
STYLING CHRISTIAN GÜNTHER MAKE-UP HETHER BECKREST AT WORKGROUP

Numbers is like a dysfunctional family. Sitting down with the San Francisco three-piece in guitarist Dave Broekema's artfully cluttered living room (where a broken-down two-track tape machine competes for space with two inquisitive and jumpy Bengal jungle cats and piles of vinyl records), the band, which also includes drummer/vocalist Indra Dunis and synth player/vocalist Eric Landmark, completes each other's sentences, squabbles, and trades knowing looks. But they seem to eventually always agree with each other, whether they're talking about their favorite bands (which include Les Georges Leningrad, Total Shutdown and Erase Errata) or what to wear on stage.

Their closeness also helps drive their on-stage machine, an homage to Kraftwerk and '70s No Wave herk-and-jerk fed through a punk filter. The trio take basic keyboard lines,

pounding one-two drums, and peeling guitar hooks and strip them down to the bare-bones raw power before adding the pulse of an occasional lyric, usually bleated out by Dunis from behind her drum kit. It's danceable punk to be sure, but it lacks experimental guitars, funk-derived improvisation, or disco flavor. The entire live show is closer in feeling to, say, an apolitical Minor Threat than the B-52's, !!!, The Rapture or Devo (to whom they are sometimes compared).

Kraftwerk is indeed a huge influence on the three, who take their name from a track off *Computer World*. Numbers has taken on the German foursome's penchant for hard, robotic keyboard bleeps and bloops, and perhaps more importantly, they have a similar obsession with the mundane. Their quotidian lyrics deal with the broken intercom at Landmark's job ("Intercom"), Dunis's bashfulness ("I'm Shy"),

RETRO





Eric Landmark



Dave Broekema



Indra Dunis

“Our first lyrics were really like cave-man lyrics”

and feeling ostracized by too-hip scenesters (“Too Cool to Say Hello”). “I think we kind of took that style of really simple verses from Kraftwerk,” says Broekema. “What’s fun about that is you can recognize the lyrics, and you know them, and they’re catchy, and they get in your head.”

“Our first lyrics were really like caveman lyrics,” chimes in Dunis. “The first song I wrote [‘Photographic’] was about my job. I was just trying to think of things I was experiencing at that time and there wasn’t a whole lot happening in my life at that point except for working 40 hours a week. Our recent songs have more lyrics. But not too many more!”

As if to drive the point home, Numbers’s newest song is called “Hot Fire.” According to Landmark, there are approximately six words in the entire tune; roughly, it goes, “It is on fire. Hot fire.” Of all the simple songs the band has written or tried to write, this might be the simplest. “It’s like when someone learns how to play the drums,” offers guitarist Dave Broekema, helpfully. To which Dunis adds emphatically, “It is! In fact, [the beat I play on the song] was the first drum beat I ever learned. And Eric’s keyboard part is like one note: it goes beep, beep, beep.”

It should be noted here that Numbers isn’t demystifying the process just for my benefit—their entire stage show is an ode to deflating rock’s myths and delusions of grandeur. “I notice with my Numbers keyboard parts—especially at parties when people are standing in front of me while I’m playing—is that they’re pretty simple one-note things,” says Landmark. “Everybody there is like ‘I could play that!’ And that’s really awesome.” Dunis notes: “I like being accessible and I like having the interaction with the audience and not trying to impress everyone”

“That’s not what we’re about,” Broekema concurs. “We’re totally *not* trying to be technical wizards, because we’re not. I think a lot of bands are semi-improvisational, and we’re not at all. We’re pretty rigidly structured, and there’s not that much in the structure.”

In some ways, Numbers is a reluctant band. The threesome started off with no aspirations of playing live, and Broekema had to be talked into it by Dunis. Initially, no one wanted to sing. In fact, Numbers was even a bit hard to interview at first; “It’s just that,” Dunis whispered to me, “nobody wants to be the star.”

This anti-rock star stance has a lot to do with the group’s Midwestern punk roots. The three share strong ties to Madison, Wisconsin, where Broekema and Dunis grew up and where all three went to college. “Madison has a pretty horrible music scene,” says Broekema, who says most of the college bands were bad Red Hot Chilli Peppers rip-offs. The three were part of a small group of indie punksters who had followed a meandering path from Minor Threat, Big Black and the Butthole Surfers to listening to more obscure bands, including the Contortions, Suicide, and mid-’90s Chicago outfits like the Scissor Girls and Duotron.

Numbers formed out of the ashes of Xerobot, a robotic post-punk/noise band that Broekema and Landmark started with a drummer friend from Madison. The three moved out to San Francisco together along with Dunis, who went out with Broekema at the time. “In Xerobot, I used to play a Theremin and a Moog and a guitar,” says Broekema. “And Eric played bass and a Moog. And then we had a drummer who had a bunch of stupid shit, and he eventually started playing the Theremin, too.”

“Yeah,” chimes in Landmark. “He used to control the Theremin with his torso.”

“It was totally retarded,” concurs Broekema. “I think when we started this band I decided, at least for myself, that it was time to strip things down.”

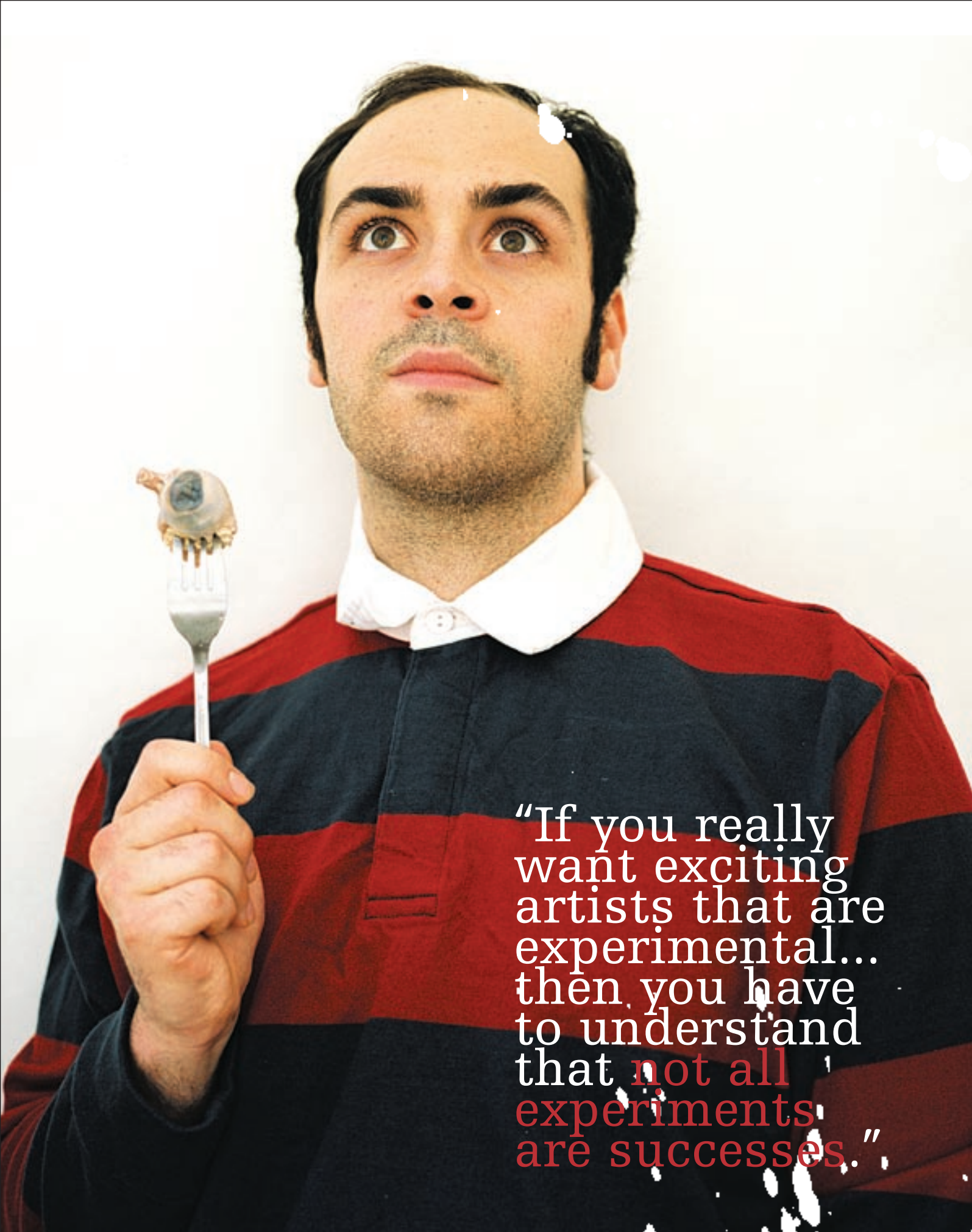
The three also say that Numbers’s sound is much more free than Xerobot’s was. “This band is less reactionary against a specific place, like Wisconsin,” says Broekema. “And it’s more fun. This band is more of a pop band than the other band was.”

“When Numbers started it wasn’t as dancey, and we had less grooves,” explains Landmark. “But the people who would come to shows were fun, and they made us want to make music that was more fun. It’s kind of fun trying to write songs that are half the noise element to them—the real dissonant element—but that are dancey at the same time.”

Numbers may be a dance band, but aside from Landmark’s synths—including the homemade Buzzerk—and a few pedals, they’re free of extraneous electronic technology. According to the three, eschewing computer music is a way of making sure their sound is delivered straight to the audience’s veins.

“Part of it for me is what’s actually going to be fun to play,” avers Broekema. “I don’t want to have to worry about all this crap like, is this plugged in, or this is not the right sound on this thing. I just want to keep it simple so it’s pretty fun.”

“Yeah, and if you become too complicated, it can get kind of mathy,” says Dunis. Landmark thinks about it for a minute. “We like complicated shit too,” he offers, “but we just don’t want to do it ourselves.”



"If you really want exciting artists that are experimental... then you have to understand that **not all experiments are successes.**"

MEOW MIX

WHEN NO ONE WAS LOOKING, TIGERBEAT6 STARTED A REVOLUTION. KID606 AND HIS TIGERBEAT6 LABEL ROSTER HAVE APPLIED PUNK'S "NO RULES" ETHOS TO FERAL ELECTRONIC RELEASES, CASTING DANCE, GLITCH AND INDIE ROCK CONVENTIONS INTO THE BONFIRE, AND WELDING TOGETHER A MUSIC SCENE BASED IN DIY ART, GET-IN-THE-VAN TOURING, LOUD, NOISY THUMPING, AND JUST PLAIN ASS-KICKING RECORDS. HERE'S HOW THE REVOLT BEGAN.

WORDS NIMN HOST IMAGE JESSICA MILLER

I meet up with Miguel Depedro, better known as Kid606, in a macrobiotic café in Oakland. The first thing I notice is that the daytime Depedro is a far cry from the manic and profusely sweating laptop wunderkind that I first bonded with in a dark dance club over our love of jiggy rap. In fact, among the leafy shards of kale and wan hippie girls that populate this barn-like restaurant (where he has a frequent buyer's card), he almost looks angelic. But the deeper we get into conversation, Depedro—who keeps one bead of sweat precisely trailing down his forehead throughout the interview—reveals the intense focus and strange history that has made him captain of Tigerbeat6's motley crew.

Tigerbeat6 has done a lot to bring the punk ethos into electronic music, from the actual sound of their bands, to their uniquely collectable packaging, to their business ethics. This leads many to assume that Miguel must have grown up within punk's fold. They're only half-right.

Growing up in San Diego, Miguel was actually taken with electronic music and hip-hop first. At the age of 14, his fingertip was blown off in a freak accident and the resulting sulfur poisoning meant he had to be home-schooled. When he recovered, he was sent to an alternative school where you were allowed to take as many community college courses as you wanted for high school credit. Miguel skipped nearly all the fundamentals—math, English, science—in favor of six college music courses, excelling at the electronic music classes.

"The main reason I'm into electronic music is because no one around me was," he explains. "I mean, all the bands around me were like, [San Diego noise-punk bands] The Locust, Klikatat, Ikatowi and Drive Like Jehu. Electronic music was just the most uncool thing to do, but I also felt like it was thing that had the most potential. It was definitely a bit of rebellion. And I just didn't get along with any of the people, so I couldn't be in a band. I was just very isolated."

By the age of 16, Miguel was already doing his Kid606 stuff, as well as acid techno in the group Aerial and gabber as Space Room; searching for a way to release it, he began working at punk label Vinyl Communications. It was there that he learned about CD manufacturing, distribution and mastering, all of which has helped him put out Tigerbeat6's releases at an amazingly competent clip. "It was like, if you were willing to back it up, you could do whatever you wanted," he says of the label. "It was total freedom. Up until this day, I've never sent anyone a demo. I've never had to go through that whole process, which means that I don't have that kind of structure of working with other people and back and forth. I just kind of do whatever I want. If a label wants to put it out great. If not, then fuck 'em."

Quickly growing sick of playing at San Diego's half-baked raves and the city's stale musical climate, Miguel moved Tigerbeat's operations to Oakland in 2000. These days, the label's day-to-day operations are run by Bay Area stalwart Cathy Ellis, an ex-punk rocker best known for playing in Me First and Fully Boney and running the drum & bass label Green. But Miguel still does more than he wants to for his pet project, including picking the artists, overseeing all the output, and even writing the occasional one-sheet for a band's press packet. Miguel has also found the energy for two offshoot labels, mash-up/freak-out imprint Violent Turd and the dancehall/glitch-oriented Shockout.

I had always envisioned Miguel as the curator of Tigerbeat6,

but he's really more like the director of a bizarre cast of characters that includes experimental rap MC/superfreak Cex, costume-clad dance band Dynasty, British reggae fiend The Bug, Chilean synthesizer craftsman Original Hamster, and Knifehandchop, a 19-year old ex-candy raver from Toronto who likes to splice together boinging techno and gabber with rough dancehall chat to create the ultimate sugar-rush music. The label's cast rotates, bringing on new acts and letting artists go when they want to move on to bigger pastures. Tigerbeat's somewhat lax rules and Miguel's eye for talent has allowed the label to break underground stars like nerd lothario Gold Chains, art-punk noise-terrorists Black Dice, and militant French trio DAT Politics.

Depedro didn't sculpt the label as a circus of personalities—most of the artists on Tigerbeat6 were friends of his before he even ever listened to their music. Yet Miguel's practice of releasing music that no one else will has attracted a pool of iconoclasts. "The stuff I release is not even always what I like—it's what's possible," he says. "I don't like [it] when people try to sculpt a label and are very picky and very stylized. And I definitely don't have the patience or time or talent pool to do that. Tigerbeat6 is more about everyone having the same idea rather than the same sound."

To that end, Miguel rarely even listens to demos, preferring to sign people he's played with on tour or been introduced to via friends. "If we're not going to hear about the music through other means, it's not really worth our time to initiate a relationship," he says matter-of-factly. "We think it's better to only deal with people who are our friends and have that close-knit relationship with us. But we want artists as far away as Denmark and Brazil and Japan and Australia." Although much of Tigerbeat6's roster hails from the Bay Area, Miguel is keen to not be seen as the Dischord of electronic music. "If we only signed artists from San Francisco, I don't think we'd have half as good releases overall," he says.

Additionally, says Depedro, most of the demos he receives are too derivative, the antithesis of the limits his label is trying to push. "Ninety percent of the demos sound like Kid606, and that's the stuff that we aren't interested in," he explains. "When something sounds different, that's when it starts to get interesting. I think that's how we keep a fanbase of people. They aren't looking for 10 records that sound like Kid606."

One of the perils of Depedro's eclecticism is that while he never signs a band he doesn't like, he often releases records he can't stand. But his philosophy of allowing artists freedom—whether that means musical free license or letting them record for other labels—keeps him from censoring albums. "Everyone goes through phases," he says. "If you really want exciting artists that are experimental—and I'm not talking artists that are experimental like they scratch a turntable for 45 minutes, I mean experimental like they don't know what the hell they're doing but they're trying out weird, different things—then you have to understand that not all experiments are successes. We try to keep the failures to a minimum. But at the same time, if someone puts a lot of work into something and they have an audience of people who are into it, then you kind of have to let it out there. I have to [figure it out]: am I going to be this total Svengali godfather mafioso where what I say rules? If I can do what I want, why can't the other artists do whatever they want?"

www.tigerbeat6.com



second-hand EMAX 2 sampler. On albums like *It's Hard To Be A Baby*, he serves up scrambled minimalist beats mixed with heavy, melodic noise. These days, the post-punk innovator—who has worked with Savage Republic, Lusk, and Steaming Coils, among others—is hot on the heels of the first Medicine album since their 1995 breakup, *The Mechanical Forces of Love* (Wall of Sound/Astralwerks).

XLR8R: What's your favorite spot on the Monopoly board besides Electric Company?

Brad Laner: "Go"

XLR8R: What part of your personality do you tap into to create your electronic music?

BL: The reticent part.

XLR8R: What is your favorite spot in LA?

BL: Any structure built before 1970 and still standing will do.

XLR8R: What visual artist has had the most influence on you?

BL: Stan Brakhage.

XLR8R: Who is your favorite pop star?

BL: Kid606.

XLR8R: What is your hard drive called?

BL: Little Brad.

XLR8R: What's the toughest thing about being a baby?

BL: Depending on others.

www.bradlaner.com

ELECTRIC COMPANY

Los Angeles-born and bred Brad Laner is probably best known for his work with mid-'90s noise-rock stormers Medicine, of whom Kid606 is a huge fan. By the time Kid came calling, Laner had already been plugging away on his Electric Company project since 1994, prompted by boredom with rock and a



DJ/RUPTURE

DJ/Rupture has made a name for himself by suturing together intense mixed CDs that combine explosive ragga jungle, driving polyrhythmic gabber, and glitchy techno. The 27-year-old New Englander—now transplanted to Barcelona—got his stylistic start on college radio, but not before pissing off a few higher-ups at his alma mater, Harvard. "Harvard's radio station was extremely conservative," he explains. "You either had to play punk rock—which was like, a really rich white kid's version of punk rock—or you had to choose jazz or classical. I was like, 'I want to do

this,' which was more or less what I'm doing now. So I ended up having a show at MIT instead." Moving on, DJ/Rupture discovered jungle, founded Boston's Tone Birth collective, and wrote a thesis called *The Walking Disfigured: Tropes of Illegibility in American Short Fiction*. He then hooked up with Tigerbeat6 for the release of mix CDs like *Minesweeper Suite* and the limited edition *Gold Teeth Thief*. On his incendiary new album, *Special Gunpowder*, Rupture promises to dig deeper, presenting all original tracks with nary a turntable in sight.

XLR8R: What is your favorite piece of technology?

DJ/Rupture: The printing press.

XLR8R: What was the first band that you really fell in love with?

DJ/R: One was a really weird, quirky British band called Stump and the other band was the Japanese band The Ruins.

XLR8R: What's a bigger influence: Bounty Killer, Aaliyah or ragga jungle?

DJ/R: It would have to be ragga jungle. Bounty Killer is totally amazing—he's done all these incredible tunes. With Aaliyah, a lot of what made her so great was Timbaland. Ragga jungle was just a flashpoint. When I heard it, I just flipped. I had been into reggae and I had been into techno and these things, and then when I first heard jungle, it had these crazy polyrhythms, and it was so exuberant and complex. Not a hint of nostalgia in it, and yet it used pieces of history.

XLR8R: What kind of stuff are you going to be putting out in the upcoming months?

DJ/R: I have a label called Soot. I'm putting out music from this programmer from Osaka, Japan called O-Naxx, which will be the first CD release on my label. That will be out in July. I do most of the programming for this group called Nettle—we did an album last year on this label called theAgriculture. In October, we're releasing this compilation of artists remixing Nettle, and I'm one of the remixers. The big thing is this *Special Gunpowder* record, which will be out later this year on Tigerbeat.

XLR8R: Why did you call your label Soot?

DJ/R: That's an idea I've had forever. I think I first had it in early high school. It brings together a lot for me. Soot is what's left behind after the fire, these black particles. It's about playing around with notions of lo-fi, and blackness, and burning. Black wax, black magnetic tape, the whole thing.

www.negraphonic.com

DYNASTY

At the place where dressing up meets danceable fuzz rock, you'll find Dynasty. The all-girl three-piece is fronted by the effervescent Jibz Cameron, who bleats out lines like "You've got problems/fix yourself" like a 15-year-old Go-Go, while bandmates Diana Hayes and Indra Dunis (also of Numbers) wild out with squelching sex keyboards and pounding drums. With their self-titled debut produced by Gold Chains and containing songs like dance anthem "Let's Choose Fucking," you better watch out.

XLR8R: Who is your favorite character on Dynasty?

Jibz: I think that they are all awful people, but with good clothes.

XLR8R: What's the last song you wrote about?

J: It's called "Little Bird." It's about a little bird flying through the atmosphere. In fact, those are the lyrics. It's very positive—it's an anthem to a little bird that is just starting out. You know, the bird has got a long way to go and needs encouragement.

XLR8R: Tell us about some of your favorite Dynasty costumes.

J: We have matching white sweatshirts which all have puffy paint pussy-willows on them. On the pussywillows are these kittens—pussies on the pussywillow. It's a witty pun. Diana and I really enjoy a good pun, although I think Indra may have doubts about our characters for that reason sometimes. We also have some pretty nice prom dresses, but I think lately we've been wanting to graduate to a different level and not appear so ornamental. So we've been going with this corporate executive look that will really make people take us more seriously.

XLR8R: What song do you like the best: Gang of Four's "I Love A Man in A

STARS AS EYES

Sonically sweeping out of their native Providence, RI, Steve Ferrari and Craig Four Two write songs rather than just tracks, marrying electronic hiss-and-clack and soft keyboard pulses to distorted shoegaze guitars and flanging drums. Their most recent record is *Loud New Shit*, where the duo calls in Múm, Shychild and Dwayne Sodahberk to remix their already elaborately layered concoctions.

XLR8R: How did you guys meet?

Stars As Eyes: True story: we met at a comic book class we both took when we were 14. We co-wrote a comic about this guy who lived in this kind of swamp and had a blade for one of his arms that could morph into different styles of blades. Then Craig drew it and I inked it.

XLR8R: What famous duo do you most resemble and why?

SAS: Bill & Ted, because of all the air guitar.

XLR8R: Where do you and your Craig's musical influences cross?

SAS: I'm generally a lot more impressed with noisy/screamo/skree-style music than Craig is, but I think he's into some of it. We both grew up with a lot of classic rock radio and prog bands like King Crimson, and that's really stuck with us. Then it was all about hip-hop, krautrock, psychedelic stuff. There's just so much super-good music out there. Phil Collins is also really big. A bunch of us were playing Monopoly recently and I wanted to hear some Phil Collins, and a newer friend of ours thought we were all joking. So we listened to it for a while, and he was like, "You guys are really good at this," because he thought we were straining to keep straight faces, not believing that we could actually be into Phil Collins.



(L-R) Diana, Indra, Jibz

Uniform, Toni Basil's "Hey Mickey," or 50 Cent's "In Da Club"?

J: I like the 50 Cent song because Dr. Dre did the music and it's a little dark sounding, but it's a dumb-ass song. "Hey Mickey" is a super-duper-dumb-ass song. "I Love A Man in A Uniform" is good, but I can't think of any other lyrics but those and I don't remember what the music sounds like at all.

XLR8R: What are your current obsessions as a band?

J: We really like our new practice space because it has two working vending machines, and a payphone, and a clean bathroom always stocked with toilet paper, and security, and it's soundproof, and there's no graffiti. Not like our old shithole-scumbag-rock'n'roll-dude-noodle-guitar-ninth-level-of-hell-pit that had really asinine graffiti everywhere ("Fuck Yourself," "You Suck," "Yer Gay," etc.), not necessarily directed at us but, gee, you can't help feeling that way when you read it.



Julie Baldwin

XLR8R: What was the last track you wrote about?

SAS: I think it was about Craig wandering around the neighborhood at dawn and hearing a band practicing, but to me it was about listening to "Disco Inferno" a lot recently.

XLR8R: Do you have any side projects?

SAS: Craig has these songs he writes—I guess you would call them folk songs or something, really minimal style. I have a group called Bulldozer, and I'm also working on new stuff with my friend Mark, who seems to exclusively sample really crappy Christian music.

XLR8R: Who is your favorite band on Tigerbeat beside yourselves?

SAS: Ha! Trick question! We've been really into Black Dice lately—we played with them recently in New York and they just slayed. I'm also personally psyched on the new Nathan Michel songs. He sounds like Robert Wyatt and stuff, which is so cool! That DJ/Rupture album has also been in heavy rotation the last few months, as it's totally flawless.

XLR8R: What have you been really getting into in the last six months?

SAS: Kompakt is always very reliable. Migas breakfast tacos are, too.

www.starsaseyes.com



(L-R) a fake King Riff, L'Erin, Le Kim, Obscuratron

CRACK W.A.R.

Postmodern pastiche collides with absurd dance punk when Crack: We Are Rock step inside the arena. The foursome is composed of frontwomen and leotard enthusiasts Le Kim and L'Erin on vocals, with the tetchy King Riff and Obscuratron laying down heavy electro riffs and keyboard glitch. The San Francisco band's art-damaged debut, *Silent Fantasy*, features such crowd-pleasers as "Hooker Leg," "The Sabbath," and a cover version of Foreigner's "Cold As Ice."

XLR8R: Can you explain to us what's going on on your CD cover?

Obscuratron: We are evolving, learning to use tools, and brutally eliminating other subspecies.

XLR8R: What are your current obsessions?

L'Erin: Colored gauze, Minoans.
Obscuratron: '60s psychedelia, my cat Chula the Chicken, organ records and the current government's parallels to Sinclair Lewis's 1935 [novel], *It Can't Happen Here*.

XLR8R: Are you guys lovers or fighters?

Obscuratron: Lovers.
L'Erin: It's love, love, love all around.

XLR8R: Where do all of your musical influences cross?

Obscuratron: Probably Throbbing Gristle, Cabaret Voltaire and

the Seeds, although I have got King Riff singing some early Bee Gees singles. We all listen to a lot of different records, so all of us have points of overlap, but there's no consensus taste. That's the defining aspect of the group, a meeting of disparate but not exclusive sounds and ideas. We weren't all interested in dance music or techno when we started, and by the same token we weren't all interested in a noise aesthetic or experimental music. But at our first barely rehearsed performance, it had the right combination of experimentalism and retardedness, danceability and incomprehensibility. So we decided to move forward, even if we were the only ones digging it.

XLR8R: Who came up with the name, when, and why?

Obscuratron: It was King Riff, and it was just an excuse to emblazon something on a t-shirt. I think the band laid dormant for a while with no actual members.

XLR8R: What is your favorite track on the album and why?

L'Erin: They are like our children. Could you love just one?
Obscuratron: That's like asking who's your favorite child, or which is your favorite toe. They are all special in their own way, and most of them are special in the "special" way. My feelings change all the time, but having said that, I really like playing "Animal Trap" and "Sabbath" live.

www.crackcave.com



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CEX

IMAGE CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK

Boy genius or poser savant? The mind wobbles over these questions while listening to Cex (a.k.a. 21-year-old Rjyan Kidwell), who straddles the lines between jiggy rap, lo-fi techno-hop, and MTV-style confessionals. Love him or hate him, this Baltimore native augments total self-deprecation and absurd twists on rap's trademark boasting with live shows that often end in him getting naked and inciting the audience to do the same. This self-professed "world famous retard" can be found getting ill on albums like 2001's *Oops, I Did It Again*, 2002's *Tall, Dark and Handcuffed* (both on Tigerbeat), and this year's *Being Ridden* (on Temporary Residence).

XLR8R: *What is the biggest difference between doing what you do in the Bay Area and doing it in Baltimore?*

Cex: I guess over here when people don't care, it seems like it's because they care about some other art that's shittier than mine. When people don't care in Baltimore, it's because they hate art, and they don't like any of it, and they don't see why it should be in their life.

XLR8R: *So, presumably you like the Bay Area better?*

Cex: I really don't know. The reason I came here is to be somewhere completely different, which happened. But I feel kinda like a black cloud—I feel like I've gotten more goth since I got here. Which is weird, because I was already pretty goth.

XLR8R: *What do you mean, like, a goth state of mind?*

Cex: I was dating a girl who was in a band for a couple months and she'd take me to all these shows of her friends' bands and stuff. I just felt [stupid] because six times out of seven, I'd be like, 'Is that what they do every show? Is that it? Hold on, wasn't that guy in the last band?' I was like 'Well, why doesn't he just take all his ideas

and put them in one band and it would be good, instead of being in five bands. I felt like I was asking all these questions a four-year old would ask. That makes me feel negative.

XLR8R: *So you want to see a show when you go out?*

Cex: Definitely. Bigger than that, I want to see effort. I'm kind of a jerk, because if it doesn't look like you're trying really hard, I can't watch your show. Music has to help me understand the world better than I would if we were just sitting around talking. To me, that's like the huge gun that is music. It's a bazooka you can shoot at whoever you want to. Music is so much better than talking.

XLR8R: *Who do you feel has succeeded at that?*

Cex: One of my favorite bands right now is the Microphones. It's super lo-fi music, but he really stretches it so far and you hear the gears turning. You hear this dude making his life okay by these songs. I really like that. I'm amped on Marilyn Manson for the same reason. The last record Manson did was a super-sad record about how everyone hated him and it was *sooo* teenage. My favorite line on the record is where he says, "This was never my world/you took the angels away/I kill myself to make everybody pay." That sealed my love for Manson. And then he has this new record out that's, like, a party jam. It's fun, and has all these retardedly awesome hooks. And he's just going, "It's cool to be me. And it's pretty awesome that there's me." I think that music is serving a real-life function. You know, when heads are hating on me, I can just turn on the Manson and go "Wow, my man Manson has some of the similar problems. And he's getting through them like gangbusters."

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FRESH PRODUCE

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STUFF »



B-BOY B-BAILER BOUNDLESS

THERE'S NOTHING THAT CONSUMMATE NEW YORKER BOBBITO AIN'T GOOD AT OR INVOLVED IN. JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT NYC WAS TIRED, KID'S GOT SOME NEW FLAVORS FOR YOUR EARS, EYES, FEET & HEAD.

In terms of influence, few people even strive for the almost mythical status that Bobbito Garcia has attained simply by being himself. As a writer, label head, DJ, shop-owner, and all-around visionary, he's played an instrumental role in elevating New York street culture to iconic status. An NYC legend thanks to his groundbreaking radio show on WKCR with DJ Stretch Armstrong, Bobbito's signature off-kilter sense of humor and discerning aesthetic have reached all across the globe through his regular Sound Check column in *Vibe Magazine*, his utterly unprecedented Fondle Em record label (R.I.P.), and his current musical endeavor, Fruitmeat Records. There's also his stints as an actor, creative consultant, Rock Steady Crew member, and basketball player/coach. And he's now on his first foray into the wilds of book publishing with *Where'd You Get Those: New York City Sneaker Culture 1960-1987*, an exhaustive and thorough exploration of his longstanding jones for fresh kicks. Originally known as Bobbito the Barber, he now goes by the name Cucumber Slice, presumably because he's just that cool.

Perhaps greatest among his many claims to fame, Bobbito was one of the first cats to recognize the wealth of talented MCs and producers operating outside of the major label monopoly of the airwaves. In the early '90s, his radio show was the barometer for the underground, breaking unsigned artists like Nas and Jay-Z by playing their demos on air. His Fondle Em imprint introduced still-unknowns like Cage, MF Doom, the Arsonists, and Godfather Don and Kool Keith AKA The Cenobites. By 1996, Bobbito also operated Footwork, a small boutique on 9th Street in the East Village that served as a "one stop shop for shit you just couldn't find other places, be it secondhand records, vintage sneakers fresh out the box, graffiti magazines from Europe, mixtapes, or t-shirts." Though the shop closed in 2000, it basically set the tone for the current trend of retail as curatorial exercise (Alife, Red Five). It wasn't the first store of its kind, but Footwork, like everything Bobbito is involved with, was pretty fresh.

Though he first emerged as a champion of "avant garde indie hip-hop," Bobbito has redefined himself as New York's answer to Gilles Peterson: a wildly eclectic musical figure devoted to showing that rootsy salsa can stand side by side with true school hip-hop. This ethos guides Fruitmeat, which, in partnership with Giant Step Records, has released everything from the debut single by soul chanteuse Vinia Mojica to Afrobeat by Ocote Soul Sounds. As Bobbito explains, "With Fondle Em, even though people didn't know what was coming out, they knew to trust the label. That's what I'm trying to establish with Fruitmeat. Hip-



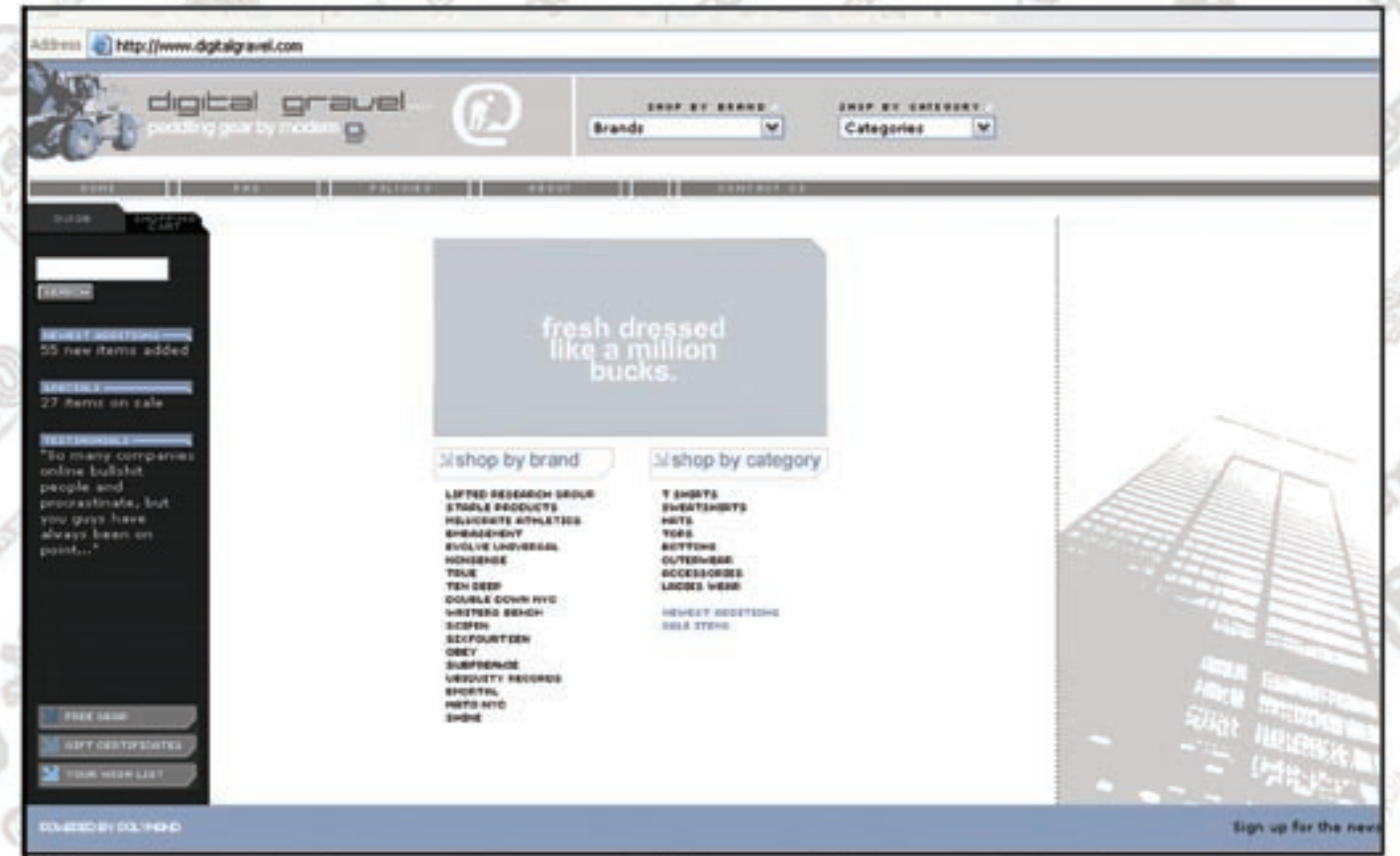
hop kids may not be open to playing a soul record, or a salsa record, or know how or when to play it in their set. But I'm hoping that people will trust my judgement in music, and that if they enjoyed hearing me spin or enjoyed what I brought to the table in terms of indie hip-hop, maybe they can broaden their spectrum. Fondle Em sort of opened some peoples' minds to what can be considered dope hip-hop. I'm trying now to expand peoples' minds to consider what can be dope music, period." Garcia's also lent his exceptional taste and ear for what's next to film projects, working as a music supervisor for major Hollywood features like Spike Lee's *25th Hour* as well as independents like *Sneaker Heads*, a forthcoming documentary by Israel, director of *The Freshest Kids: A History Of The B-Boy*.

To know Bobbito is to understand what it means to be a b-boy connoisseur. He brings the playful competitiveness of battling to everything he does, be it playing Afrobeat to hip-hop heads or creating *Bobbito's Basics To Boogie*, his instructional basketball DVD. It's not that he's aggressive or a show-off—it's simply a matter of taking things one step further than the next man. "I like to continually challenge myself and find new ways to express myself," he explains with signature understatement. "And I work for myself, so I have to find ways to make money without compromising myself. I do a number of different things and I feel blessed to be able to do them and be recognized for them." In the authenticity-obsessed underground, he has long been one of the gatekeepers of credibility. That's why Nike has been turning to him for cast-

ing and location advice for nearly a decade. As his repertoire as a DJ has grown to include rare soul, funk, Afrobeat, salsa and house music, so too have the tastes of his constantly expanding international audience. No longer on the radio, Bobbito preaches to his congregation of music worshippers via his longstanding weekly, Waffles N Falafels at APT, and through his involvement with the Martinez Gallery in Brooklyn. Whereas his weekly is the quintessential beathead scene, the Martinez Gallery (of which Garcia is part-owner) is something New York hasn't seen in a long time. To Bobbito, it's a "warm, inviting space where the progressive art community that's graffiti-savvy can meet. It's also where the progressive music community that's down to dance can hang out." In many ways, it's a meeting point for Bobbito's roots in New York street culture and his expansive vision of the 21st century underground to coexist.

With both a respect for cultural traditions and an eye on what's next and what's possible, Bobbito never rests. "That's the type of person I've always been, doing a radio show playing demos, doing open mics with Rocky at Nuyorican Poets' Café," he muses. "I like putting people up on some shit they aren't up on. Looking at things now, I might have been a little too early with some of this stuff, but I think that ultimately I'm going to leave an impression."

Where'd You Get Those: *New York City Sneaker Culture 1960-1987* is published this fall by Testify Book/Powerhouse Books. *Bobbito and Spinna's Wonder-Full compilation* is out any day now on Harmless Recordings. *Bounce Magazine*, Bobbito's new venture devoted to playground hoops, is out now.



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VOICES VARY

FOLLOWING THE PATHS OF DRUM & BASS AND 2-STEP, BROKEN BEAT HAS EVOLVED INTO THE UK'S MOST IMPOR- TANT FUTURE-THINKING SOUL MOVEMENT. YET ITS REMAINED A FIRMLY UNDERGROUND PROPOSITION. THE SCENE'S VOCALISTS, ALTHOUGH SOME OF BRITAIN'S FINEST, ARE SUBSEQUENTLY LITTLE KNOWN OUTSIDE OF CERTAIN CIRCLES. XLR8R CATCHES UP WITH A FEW OF THEM TO FIND OUT WHY.



"YOU DON'T NEED TO BE COMMERCIAL, BUT YOU CAN GIVE WHAT YOU DO A LITTLE MORE ACCESSIBILITY, PERHAPS."

LORETTA HEYWOOD

WORDS & IMAGES PAUL SULLIVAN



souful dialogue between England and America over the last few decades has largely seen the US do most of the talking and the UK most of the listening. Of course, there have been many illustrious British soul acts including Omar, Sade, Loose Ends, Innocence, Beverly Knight, Soul II Soul and Lynden David Hall. But we refer to American soul stars by their *first names*—Curtis, Marvin, Aretha, Otis, Isaac, Stevie, Marlena *et al.* In 2003, things are hardly any different. Although the "neo-soul" tag now includes both American and European artists, Yanks like Erykah Badu, D'Angelo, Macy Gray, Jill Scott, Angie Stone and Carl Thomas enjoy far more exposure than most of their European counterparts.

London's broken beat vocalists illustrate the point. Izzy Dunn, Vanessa Freeman, Loretta Heywood, Carina Andersson, Bembe Segue, Alison David and Julie Dexter are hardly household names in their own country, let alone outside of it. Yet not only are they incredibly talented, they're involved in a scene that arguably represents the first real soul movement in the UK since electronic music began rewriting its boundaries in the early '90s.

"A lot of us have grown up on American black music," says Bembe Segue, the original broken-beat chanteuse, who gave voice to the nascent productions of stalwarts such as IG Culture, Dego McFarlane (4hero), People Records and Phil Asher. "In many cases, UK music has been a pale imitation of US traditions. What a lot of people and major labels have tried to do over the years is assimilate this imported music, then sell it back to the American market, which really baffles me. When IG and myself were making hip-hop in the '80s, we had a very intense hatred of UK MCs who rapped in American accents. Most of us agree that the only thing that really translated worldwide on a soul basis from the UK were Soul II



"I FEEL A LOT OF UNITY
ON THIS SCENE,
WHICH MUSICALLY IS
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CARINA ANDERSSON



BEEMBE SEGUE

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IT DID, I MIGHT STILL
BE BANGING MY HEAD
AGAINST A BRICK WALL
TRYING TO SING LIKE
JILL SCOTT."

Soul, and that's because it was time for a change. There was a certain vibe that fitted in with what was happening in all of our worlds at that time, and [it's similar] to what's happening now."

Though broken beat fuses other music (funk, soul, hip-hop, jazz fusion, house, drum & bass, Latin), it remains distinctively original, and not only in terms of its Afro-Latin sense of syncopated rhythm. The genre also offers up imaginative and experimental formats (from acoustic singer-songwriter material to full-on tech-edged rumpers), hyped and expansive r&b accents (e.g. Afronaut's "Transcend Me"), complex song structures, erudite songwriting, and swirling melodies. Powered by producers who've abandoned more conventional genres, broken beat's challenge to dance music's traditional house and techno regime has attracted both global respect and a plethora of vocal talent.

"I feel a lot of unity on this scene, which musically is just incredible," enthuses Carina Andersson, the Swedish ex-pat who appeared on 4hero's faithful rendition of Minnie Riperton's "Les Fleur," and who now works with 4hero drummer Hopper on Mark Mac's Twisted Funk label. "I originally come from a jazz and classical background, but I was drawn to do this music simply because there's not so many rules, which means a lot of freedom. It's not restrictive at all, and it certainly comes from the heart—though that can be hard sometimes, as good and honest musicians usually suffer. People who aren't commercially minded don't get breaks these days. But it should be the opposite."

Why do American acts who work in styles similar to broken beat—like the Roots, Jay Dee and Timbaland—remain saleable entities, while UK artists like 4hero, IG Culture, Domu, Phil Asher and Seiji are regarded as "non-commercial"? Many point to the rhythmic dynamics: we may call it all "neo-soul" but it's easier to nod along to a Jay Dee beat than to catch broken beat's scattered pulse. As the journalist Kodwo Eshun pointed out, it's possibly the only form of dancefloor music that makes you feel you have the wrong amount of legs. Some of the scene's singers have other theories.

"The scene has been associated with jazz, and for a lot of people that means closing their minds off to it," claims Loretta Heywood, whose career started with Love TKO and Bomb The Bass in the late '80s and has been re-launched via killer rubs with the Bugz In The Attic stable. "Jazz doesn't sell, and people think it's a bit weird. Other things come up from an underground level all the time and are mainstream successes. So Solid Crew did something that ended up getting totally on the map. Yet producers like Orin [Walters] and the Bugz crew, IG and Phil and the rest of them are incredibly competent, and they don't get bigged up."

Vanessa Freeman, who's worked with a range of artists from Dego to Pressure Drop, blames the lack of crossover on the music industry rather than the producers. "I think the problem is that the music industry here goes for the safe option," she says. "It's just easier for them to lock onto the easy stuff. If it's not 4/4, we can't accept it—it's considered irregular and rebellious. But rebellion is a good thing, because it changes universes and attitudes. The Beatles were rebels, but they definitely changed things. [People ask] too many questions about this music, and they just need to let it flow and listen to it. All the producers and singers are amazing, and it's madness that it's not on major UK radio stations."

Like the producers, broken beat's vocalists come from diverse backgrounds, including jazz, classical, urban and gospel traditions. The style's appeal to so many different singers testifies to its innate versatility, which the singers keep fuelling. "It [takes] a certain headspace to be able to sing anything over this music," avers Segue. "You have to look a little bit deeper. If you're making it, you have to look for vocalists who haven't maybe had a chance to express [themselves] yet. The reward is finding your own voice. If the music hadn't developed the way it did, I [might] still be banging my head against a brick wall trying to sing like Jill Scott. Instead of just singing a traditional soul or r & b style over a new type of music, the vocals have evolved, and everyone has their own little flavor."

The scene might not have blown up as yet, but it has developed a grassroots support network of soul-lovers from Norway to New Zealand who are feeling it, playing it and presenting their own takes on it. The US soul underground has responded, resulting in communication and interplay between UK producers/singers and the likes of Jill Scott, Carl Craig, Vikter Duplax, King Britt, Bahamadia, The Roots, Titontón Duvante, Recloose and many others.

UK vocalists are pushing for mass appeal. Segue's live show—a 14-piece extravaganza that can hardly be ignored in terms of sheer live force and musical accomplishment—has received rave reviews from the mainstream and underground press, and her forthcoming album is highly anticipated to be a breakthrough for the scene. Most of the other vocalists are hoping to drop albums later this year or early next, and share a desire to make their sounds true but accessible.

"You don't need to be commercial, but you can give what you do a little more accessibility, perhaps," says Heywood, echoing the sentiments of others. "Then you can have the best of both worlds. You can educate people on different levels, give them something they understand a little bit first, then more and more of the more complex material. Björk does it, Massive Attack have done it...it's about being cutting edge yet accessible at the same time." b

TOP 10 BROKEN BEAT SINGERS SINGLES:

Afronaught featuring Melissa Browne "Transcend Me" (Apolo)

Izzy Dunn "Fire" (Firewood)

Alison David "One Last Look" (Bina Sweet)

Da One Away featuring Bembe Segue "Mind (Fly Away)" (2000 Black)

4hero featuring Alma Horton "Hold It Down" (Taking Load)

BB Boogie "Tell Him" (Bina Sweet)

Alex Attias featuring Vanessa Freeman "Waltz For Little Eva" (Vaiant)

Bembe Segue "Amazing" (Man Squared)

KV5 featuring Julie Dexter "So Far" (Humbid)

Waiwan featuring Loretta Heywood "Feelin Me Feeling You" (Earth Project)

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WORDS TONY WIRE IMAGES DAVID MUGLE

"If I could just have this one device," a slightly sickly Richard Devine yearns, leaning into the recuperative steam rising off a bowl of chicken and coconut milk broth. "This one device that could plug directly into my brain to allow me to record the music I conceptualize, I think I would never want or need another instrument in my life."

Devine is wired. It's not that he's located a foreign surgeon to augment his cortex, or that he's even utilizing one of the many PDA cell phones, PowerBooks, MiniDiscs or digital cameras that are always within reach of the obsessive archivist. He's just getting off talking context over a heaping serving of his favorite Thai pepper chicken fried rice.

Indeed, Richard Devine is wired, especially when he talks about his transformation from a hip-hop-loving suburban skate punk—now graduated from Kennesaw State University with a BFA in graphic communications—into a world-renowned manipulator of digital dementia at the age of 26.

"I live in a golf-course-perfectly-manicured-lawn-traffic-free community nominated as one of the Top 10 suburban areas to live in the United States," Devine admits of his Roswell, GA homebase. His pristine home is worlds away from nearby Atlanta's industrial, almost morbid, surroundings, which seem a more likely inspiration for his skewed musical vision.

"I don't live in a household affected by alcohol or abuse or some problem in the family structure that causes me to create this violent juxtaposition of shapes and smears," Devine continues. "There have never really been that many rules. Well, you have to take off the shoes and definitely say hi to the Mom if she's around. Otherwise, I play very loud levels at all times of night without complaints. My parents are a little crazy, but they've always been really supportive of my music-making career. If I make good money, I can live at home forever."

You'd be hard-pressed to find another family so accepting of their son

"THERE HAVE NEVER REALLY BEEN THAT MANY RULES. WELL, YOU HAVE TO TAKE OFF THE SHOES AND DEFINITELY SAY HI TO THE MOM IF SHE'S AROUND. IF I MAKE GOOD MONEY, I CAN LIVE AT HOME FOREVER."

spiking the power grid by constructing a "bedroom" studio whose value exceeds \$60,000, and whose volume can equally be described as excessive. But put aside the 56-channel mixing console, ProTools rig, Surroundsound studio monitors and racks of digital processors that take up one wall of Devine's bedroom, the two turntables and pair of laptops that reside against the other wall, and the copious collection of CDs and vinyl (much of it still unopened) that occupies the remaining space, and you're left with a house that isn't far removed from your typical upper middle class, suburban, seven-bathroom existence.

"I don't think my music has anything directly to do with my immediate environment," Devine concedes, "because that's very quiet and stable. I think it's more seclusion. I'd satisfy myself by warping my immediate surroundings into what wasn't there."

Devine's always found himself in insular yet oddly social subsets. He was magnetically attracted to artists like Coil, Aphex Twin and My Bloody Valentine, composers known for notoriously isolated sound/studio worlds. But if it weren't for some pretty disastrous 10-stair tricks, Devine might have stuck to his first love: the equally artistic, outsider culture of skateboarding.

"I've discussed this with Planet μ 's Canadian crunchy click/drill 'n' bass composer] Venetian Snares, and I've heard [San Francisco-based deep house producer] Miquel Migs describe something similar, but in terms of surfing," Devine recalls. "With skateboarding, it was always about style, how smooth you could make tricks. With sound, it's how you can flip things out and yet entertain. And you can skate/record solo or with others, in a showcase or just challenging yourself. We're just a generation ripping the new styles in tracks."

But Tony Hawk and X Games all-stars aside, neither skateboarding nor





“OVERSEAS,
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his flirtation with an architectural career (designing what he calls “futuristic, elegant, impossibly expensive living spaces”) would have taken Devine quite so far as he has gotten with IDM—he is currently one of its most vaunted composer/producers/moguls. From the age of 16, Devine has been fascinated by the unnatural sliding beats between the syncopation of manmade objects such as windshield wipers, conveyer belts, garbage disposals, even the sound of skateboarders sliding down handrails (some of these sounds were used in his earliest recorded experiments). Once he discovered the rhythmic work of Aphex Twin and married it to Morton Subotnik’s fluid interchange of textural timbres and the collage aesthetic of John Cage, Devine realized his desire was to command the structure of electroacoustic chaos.

“My most interesting challenge has [been to make] the rough sound clean,” Devine states. “Francis Bacon said of his painting that he was trying to portray how violent human nature really was. He’d create apparitions within his canvas, where for only a second would you see an animal’s teeth in this black smear. He would turn the chaos in that blurred movement into lasting beauty.

“I’ve realized that I think my music functions similarly, more as abstract audio art,” he continues. “With a lot of music you’re brought to a state of mind you can recognize. For me, the goal is opposite. I try tapping uncertainty, emotions that aren’t concrete. I want to create the sound of surgical high-tech machines working on someone’s mechanical arm in a tank full of whales writing with pencils on rocks in metal pans. My sound is like the first time you trip on acid and forget how to translate your native tongue. It’s a gymnastic competition where people pitch liquid metal. I want to continue to develop music EQed in a way that reflects my distinct personality.”

That personality certainly has its contradictions. Devine started plun-

dering pawnshops for analog gear (some still stored in his bathroom closet) but now works solely within the digital realm, programming presets/sound banks for Native Instruments, DJing with Traktor and Final Scratch, and participating in the installation of 12.1 (a 12-surround-sound speaker set up) sensory environments. Devine is a technophile always looking towards the latest upgrade, and yet he’s worn a signature style of discount nine-dollar sandals for seven years. He works 10-hour stints replicating 3-D in the stereo field, yet his ‘80s record collection rivals that of even the most indoctrinated frat boy, not to mention he’s collected the entire Naked Music catalog.

He digitally dissects sound, yet attempts to avoid processed food. He travels the world, playing speaker-threatening frequencies in hollowed-out aircraft hangers, submerged discothèques and cultured marble halls. Devine is also plugged in—to boundary-blending, like-minded and future-sighted producers who record experimental electronically-derived soundscapes for intercontinental labels including Warp and Schematic (the latter for whom Devine also scouts talent, engineers and masters). Yet instead of living in an urban loft, he rather happily returns home to the ‘burbs, and says hi to the Mom while slipping off his sandals on the way to his 200 square foot bedroom.

“Overseas, I’m a social sponge, absorbing all the culture I can,” Devine reflects. “But when I come home, I’m a school/family man, studying the things I’ve gathered. Probably because there’s so much order in my life, I’m not afraid to incorporate any and/or all of it. I’m not concerned about money or sounding like Autechre, so I can concentrate on being me, as far leftfield and as forward thinking as I want, always incorporating new forms. In my mind, I’ve thought of making music hundreds of times more complicated than what I’m doing now. If they could just finish that device!”

Richard Devine’s Asect:Dsect is out now on Schematic Records.

While Richard Devine, the famous producer/performer, and Richard Devine, the “school/family-man,” are certainly real, there’s an almost equally renowned, much more infamously surreal Richard Devine. Here, a handful of Devine’s friends and fellow producers recount memorable experiences with the “social sponge.”

Chris Brann, producer, Wamdue/Ananda Project/P’taah, Atlanta

I sold Richard my 101, 202 and 909 in a parking lot, I believe about 10 years ago. I also remember going over to his mom’s house somewhere in suburbia with my Atari ST to show him the finer points of sequencing [on Cubase]. He was very eager to get into anything [electronic], and showed great enthusiasm in talking about gear.

Scott Herren, producer, Prefuse 73/Savath + Savalas, Barcelona

When I started to work on records, Rich and I were trading sounds—I played him things like Alice Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders and other artists he’d call “depressed jazz” before the “mathematic” fusion era, [and I’d] put all these things on compilations called “Devine’s Explorations.” And he gave me all these samples that made my shit sound like I used computers even though I didn’t. I learned tons of stuff about early electronic composers and the process of cutting things up. I learned a lot about the way sounds shift from him, though my approach is much more emotional and his approach is much more sterile.

Steve Beckett, “big boss,” Warp Records, London

I’ve a very brief dreamlike memory of a gig we were all doing together in Milan. It was a circular room with 360-degree projections, and this super trendy fashion crowd. I just remember going over to Richie just before he was going to start playing to see if he was okay. He was staring intently at his G4 and I expected him to be nervously figuring out some MAX/MSP patch. But what he was actually doing was just playing this mpeg over and over again of this woman who had a champagne enema. So he wasn’t shitting himself about the gig—he was just watching someone else shit themselves! It just seemed like a nice contrast, the fashionable crowd looking at this supposedly “intellectual techno bod” who was actually just watching hardcore porn.



DIY M FOR MOOK

TEXT DAVID J NEISSBERG IMAGES JASON MANNING

For six years now, Sean McLusky's **Sonic Mook Experiment** has been at the miter where electronic music, art rock, neu grunge and krautrock don't so much come together, as go for a dry hump under the table. On any given night, one can find Trevor Jackson DJing alongside Jerry Dammers (yes THAT Jerry Dammers); acts as disparate as the Liars, Add N to X and Luke Vibert can all play under the same roof—the only formula at work here is not having one at all. Equally as eclectic is Mook's audience itself, a mish-mash of art school girls who make their own clothes, self-conscious *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* fanatics and a pre-mohawk DIY punk crowd. They've managed to spawn a Mook subculture that eludes being pinned down by the youth marketing dragnet or the Levi's Customization Department, no matter how many holes they stitch in it.

Elsewhere in the club, where the sound of a pint glass dropping is followed by a loud shriek and then laughter, you'll find **Jason Manning**. The closest Mook comes to having an official photographer, his work perfectly captures an experience that is more defined by lager-fuelled hijinks than prefab tranced-out bliss, and one whose sexuality is more of the "nudge nudge, wink wink" variety than *Girls Gone Wild* at Coachella. "The thing that's always amused me about Sean," says Manning, "is the way he'll go to all sorts of lengths to put all sorts of chaos together and then sit back and calmly watch things get really out of hand." *XLR8R* is proud to present a few of those moments here.

Those hoping to obtain at least a whiff of this essence can pick up *Sonic Mook Experiment*, *Sonic Mook Experiment 2: Future Rock & Roll* and the just released *Sonic Mook Experiment 3: Hot Shit*, all on Mute Records.

"He can make the roughest looking people
strangely glamorous and purposeful"
—Sean McLusky



"The most common thing that you'd experience in those corners would most likely be some kind of bodily fluid, vomit, blood, or perhaps other sorts of strange human paste. I say experience, as it usually becomes all too obvious on returning home—a strange sickly miscellany of odors."
—Jason Manning



"He has an eye for absurd detail and behavior that you only notice when you are fucked up but forget about by the next day."
~Sean McLusky

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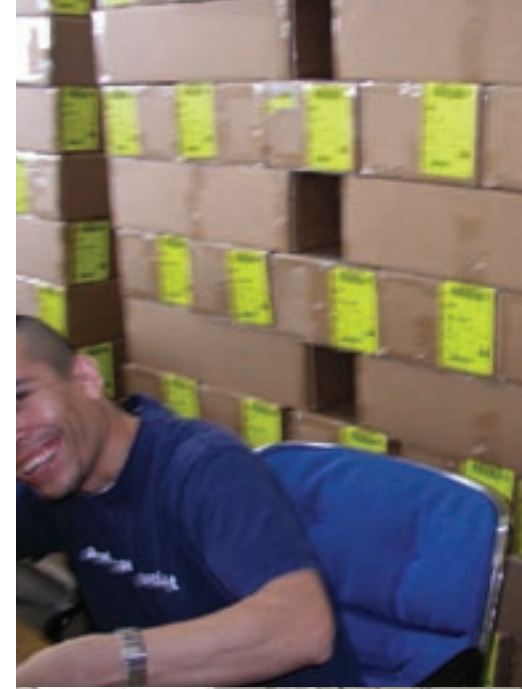


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"The whole Sonic Mook thing was one big moment, but the earlier nights definitely had a bit more edge I think. Everyone was starting to tire of the superclub thing and it became much more appealing to be hanging out somewhere a little more filthy and seemingly random. Everyone would be going crazy, being as wrong as they thought they knew how, smashing the place and each other up, all under the watchful eye of Winston Churchill whose portrait hung on the wall. Oh, and you definitely wouldn't want to be caught short and need a crap half way through the night. That filthy cubicle became a minor talking point, almost a matter of honor." ~Jason Manning





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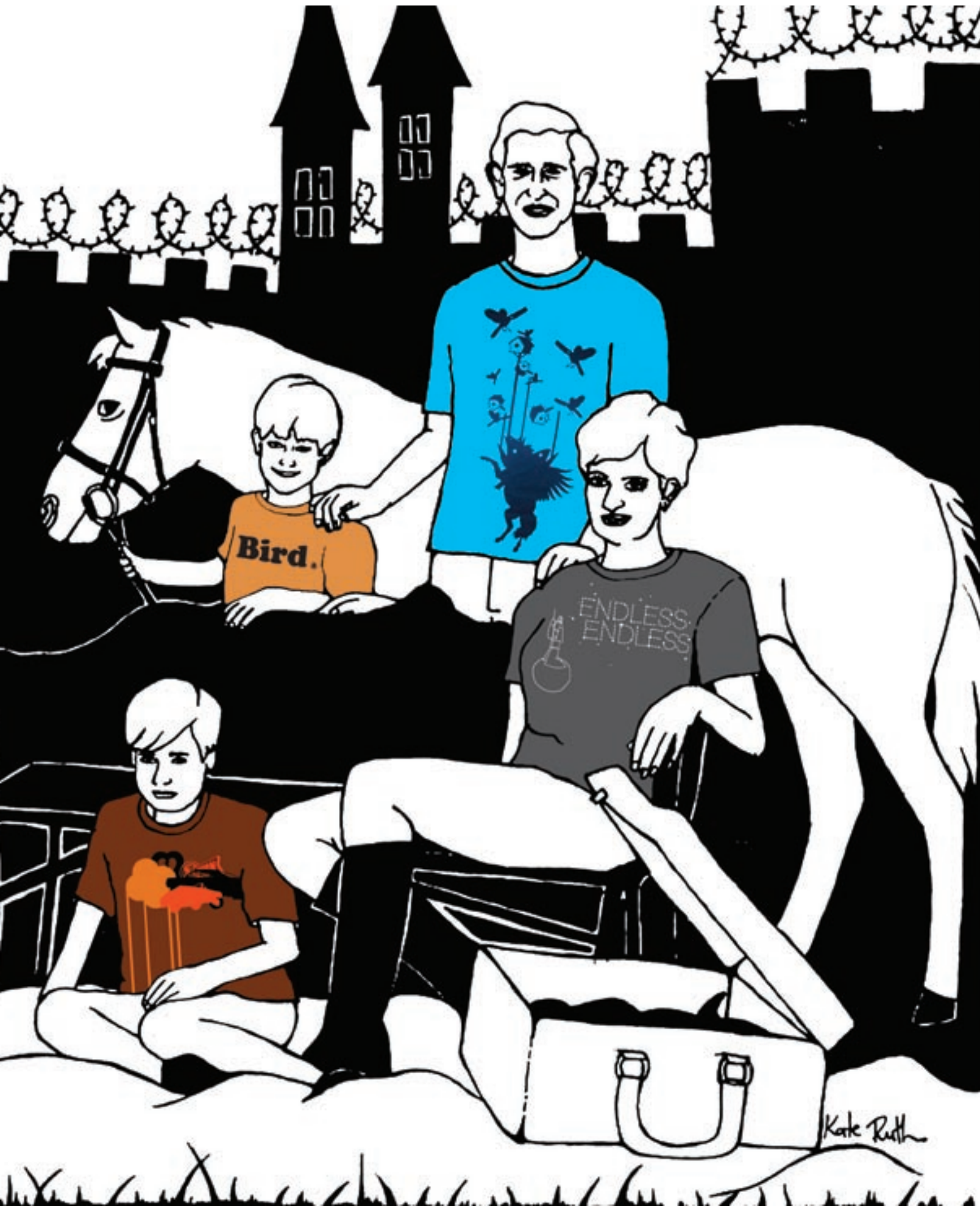
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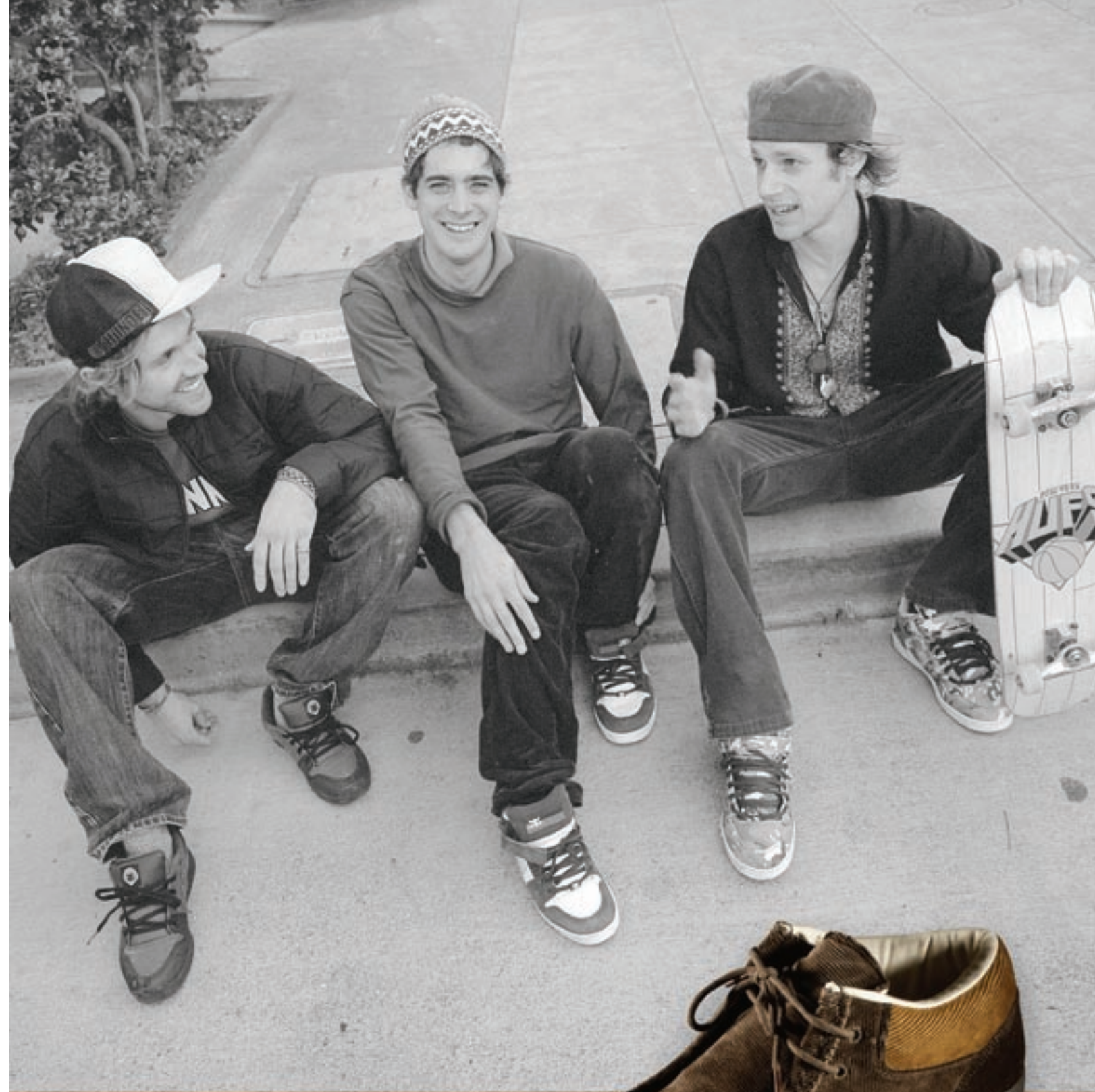
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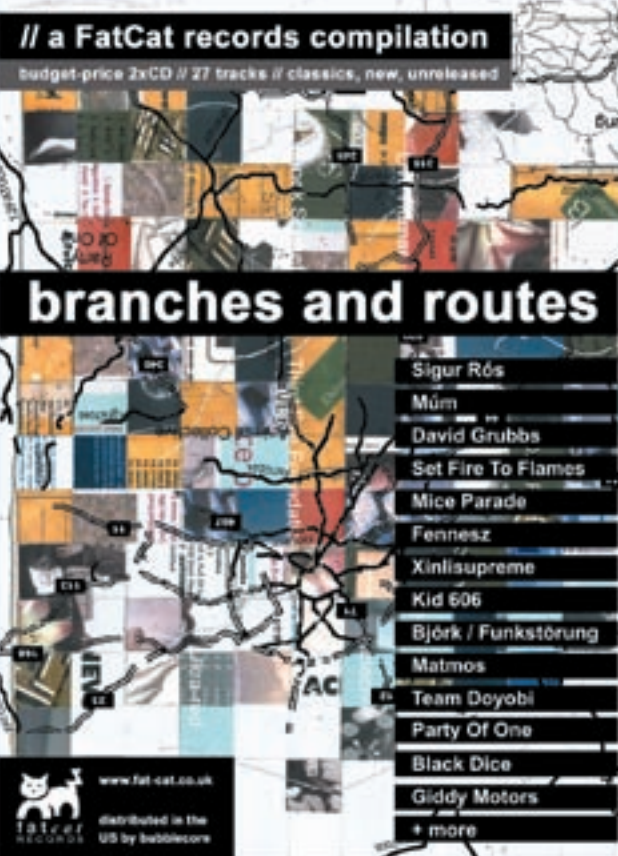


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XL REVIEWS 09.03

PANJABI MC BEWARE *Sequence/US/CD*

On his recent update of Panjabi MCs global hit "Beware of The Boys," Jay-Z raps that he wants the world to "leave Iraq alone" and drops verses that rhyme with "snake charmer" in a fervor of ethnographic conflation. Elsewhere in the hip-pop world, Timbaland writes another track prominently featuring some seriously steppin' tabla work. And Erik Sermon's just now figured out how badly he butchered his sampled Hindi lyrics on "React." Somewhere in the middle of India, surrounded by a record label-bankrupting 800-piece classical Indian orchestra, blanketed in obscurity, Talvin Singh sadly weeps and no one hears.

The influence of Indian music on American artists has been at work for some time, from the circling, vedic structures of Phillip Glass and Steve Reich to the Beatles yogic love-in to the flowy pants of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Recently, a more literal usage has swept the American hip-hop community and their pack of hungry MPCs. Perhaps the trend-transcending *piece de resistance* is the success story of UK-based Panjabi MC's enormous global smash "Beware of the Boys (Mundian To Bach Ke)," a well-reported tale of cross-cultural collaboration/exploitation. Kicking around the UK's fertile bhangra scene for five years, and finding fans amongst NYC's club goers who found themselves listening to DJ's Rehka or James Murphy, "Beware" broke the all-important commercial threshold recently when juggaman Jay-Z jumped aboard, throwing some lyrics on top whilst Top 40 radio and MTV blew their collective corporate load.

The work of 27-year-old Coventry, UK resident Rajinder Rai—whose fusion of classical Indian music, hip-hop and dance has soundtracked the bhangra/Asian Underground movement for almost a decade—"Beware of the Boys" is arguably the first the bhangra-sampling track actually created by a bhangra artist. The success raises some interesting questions about influence and representation; "Beware" can be viewed either as a gesture of unity between the African American community and the UK's South Asian community or a wholesale exploitation of an already popular existing track that has that "exotic" quality. Now that the underground has gone overground, here's where it gets real interesting. With the increased visibility of Indian music and culture, what sort of collaborations and music this leads to may be some indication of the future.

Beyond all this, though, *Beware* is actually an engaging and mature album, well beyond the big hit opener flashing its neon English lyrics, subsequently sublimated over the course of the album with rousing hip-hop numbers, downtempo female vocal tracks and straight-up bhangra songs featuring myriad classical Indian guest musicians. By the time the album's closing instrumental original of "Beware of the Boys" arrives, its atavistic immediacy still intact, something of an education has occurred and hip-hop's tricky myopic sampling trend has been expanded to a full-fledged picture.

Oh, and on the off-chance that any aspiring producers/Top 40 radio programmers are reading: "Jogi" is the next track ripe for jumping on.

Brion Paul



μ-ZIQ
BILIOUS PATHS
Planet-μ/UK/CD
 One can always count on μ-Ziq's Mike Paradinas to frame his musical ideas in excruciatingly predictable, layered groups of four-and-eight-count looping elements. Sometimes it's great (1995's *In Pine Effect*), other times it sucks (1999's *Royal Astronomy*). Thankfully, *Bilious Paths* falls into the first category. "Meinheld," which apes breakneck samples from Squarepusher's "Come On My Selector," runs a fine line between μ-Ziq's early electro-driven melodies and the latter day mash-up madness found on much of Paradinas's Planet-μ label. He also finds solace in old Suburban Base material, hijacking DJ Hype's 1993 post-rave anthem "Shot In The Dark" for ominous tones and breaks on "Grape Nut Beats." And for fans of Paradinas's early Rephlex output, "Octelcogopod" could be a brilliant holdover from 1995's *In Pine Effect*, what with its shimmering chimes and muted horn effects. While Paradinas may be an artist of few musical tricks, he makes a good show on *Bilious Paths*. *Heath K. Hignight*

9 LAZY 9
SWEET JONES
Ninja Tune/UK/CD

The Italian ensemble known as 9 Lazy 9 have been around since the acid jazz days, quietly cultivating their alternately dark and whimsical sounds and rhythms. Moody but never overly serious, they've emerged from the trip-hop era without compromising their style or sounding dated, and *Sweet Jones* takes the listener through noir-ish territory with beats that sound like something DJ Shadow would have produced in his Mo' Wax heyday. But it's the simple and mature production that elevates *Sweet Jones* to the next level. With its careful layering of guitar strings, synth accents and jazzy rhythmic elements, the album strikes a distinctive tone, but never bogs down under a heavy emotional load. *Matt Fisher*

ANGIE REED PRESENTS
THE BEST OF BARBARA BROCKHAUS
Chicks On Speed/GER/CD

Angie Reed's voice—a unique, high-pitched drawl resulting from American/Italian parentage and a Berlin base—immediately forces you to make a decision. No middle ground is on offer—you will either love it or hate it. And its omnipresence will prevent those left cold from enjoying an otherwise intriguing album. The Puppetmastaz—creators of one of hip-hop's most distinctive live shows—pop up on production duties. Characteristically, they refuse to play by the rules, preferring instead to switch emphasis from garage rock to Thomas Brinkmann-like techno with scant concern for the genre police. And Barbara Brockhaus, a fictional secretary prone to boredom-induced sexual fantasies, provides the lyrical content. No surprise, then, that Gonzales guests and Peaches proffers praise. *Dave Stenton*

AS ONE
SO FAR (SO GOOD)
Ubiquity/US/CD

Heartless techno? Not here, my friend. Over the course of eleven years and six albums, Kirk Degiorgio has carefully crafted future soul that proves the passion of machines need be neither cold nor heartless. This compendium provides an admirable overview of Degiorgio's stellar career, barring the omission (due to corporate licensing snafus) of any material from his time signed to Mo' Wax. Nevertheless, *So Far (So Good)* shines with gems like the liquid and driving "Isatai" from his seminal ART imprint,

SI BEGG
DIRECTOR'S CUT
Novamute/UK/CD

Recording under his sizable stash of pseudonyms, Begg blends, borrows and steals perhaps the world's most eclectic samples. On *Director's Cut*, Begg's deeply personal perusal of favorite styles and sounds, neither genre nor era are held sacred—lively dancehall scats skitter past celestial beings on high, and references tumble over each other in an infectious riot of grooves. Slyly humorous, Begg takes the pseudo prog-rock "River," adds some upward inflected Turner-esque vocals ("River Deep, Mountain High" comes to mind) and renders it futuristic while Kraftwerking his way through the ultra-mix of England. Witty, danceable and damn near a must-have. *Margaret Murray*

I.A. BERICOCHEA
ROJO
Plus 8/CAN/CD

It's only coincidence that Ignacio Aguilera Bericochea's name is so reminiscent of the cochlea, that bony, shell-shaped part of the inner ear that's the heart of our hearing, but how fitting it is. I.A. Bericochea's music, a profoundly thinned-out minimal techno that's more absent than present, offers the profoundest kind of intense listening, grounded with bass that reverberates deep in the body and graced with white noise that seems to graze the very surface of the ear drum, like summer grasses brushing against weathered cement. *Rajo*-like "red eye," which reflects blood vessels in the eye of a photographed subject—is a journey into the pulsing heart of sound. *Philip Sherburne*

THE BLUE SERIES CONTINUUM
THE GOODANDEVIL SESSIONS
Thirsty Ear/US/CD

The delightfully eclectic Thirsty Ear team brings us another round of jazz-inflected electronic grooves, this time via the Blue Series Continuum, an ever-changing group of musicians (aided by a producer and turntablist) capable of locking into a groove and riding it out with verve and flair. On *The GoodandEvil Sessions*, BSC serve up stuttered beats, trickling piano lines (from top ivory tickler Matthew Shipp) and discordant brass, all of which intertwine into head-nodding and toe-tapping goodness. Worth checking out, especially for those with a penchant for freewheeling jazz goodness. *Christine Hsieh*

BROADCAST
HA HA SOUND
Warp/US/CD

If Broadcast have been unfairly compared to their better-known friends Stereolab, neither group would deny their commonalities: a love of Krautrock, Sound Library music, '60s psych and the presence of chanteuses well-versed in literature and mod elegance. But where Stereolab go populist, Broadcast get personal. Where Stereolab go pop, Broadcast turns dusky. To be fair, the two are quite different. On *Ha Ha Sound*, you'll still hear the influence of Nancy Sinatra, '60s film music, United States of America and Joe Meek. But now their songwriting has caught up with their obscure knowledge. And this is the sound of Broadcast hitting their stride. *Ha Ha Sound* is what Broadcast have promised all along, and it is resplendent. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

CABARET VOLTAIRE
METHODOLOGY '74/'78: ATTIC TAPES
Mute-The Grey Area/UK/CD

Over three CDs and 53 tracks, *Methodology* unveils Cabaret Voltaire's earliest experiments with electronics. Through radical manipulations of voices and instruments, Sheffield, England's Chris Watson, Richard H. Kirk and Stephen Mallinder restlessly developed the phonemes of a sonic vocabulary that would coalesce into the viral language heard on their bleak, industrial-electrofunk classics *Red Mecca* and *2 X 45*. But before those refinements came and before they embraced rhythm and Burroughsian paranoia, Cabaret Voltaire diabolically schemed in the studio like pre-*Autobahn* Kraftwerk, forging bizarrely bleeping abstractions akin to Gil Melle's *Andromeda Strain* soundtrack and elaborating on the timbral mutations pioneered by Tod Dockstader and Morton Subotnick. This boxed set is both a revelatory peak into a crucial electronic group's embryonic stage, and a key chapter in electronic music's evolution in the '70s, a decade that (contrary to conventional wisdom) abounded with innovation—as did Cabaret Voltaire. *Dave Segal*

CEEPHAX
EXIDY TOURS
First Cask/FRA/CD

Blah, blah, blah, Squarepusher, Squarepusher, Squarepusher. Has young Ceephax auteur Andy Jenkinson any other identity than being Tom "Squarepusher" Jenkinson's little brother? Oh yeah, then Aphex ranked him as his new favorite artist. Double fucking whammy there. God-willing and the creek doesn't rise, the breathtaking *Exidy Tours* should shut them all up with its awe-inspiring genesis of a neo-acid electro revolution. And not just your usual I'm-a-mad-nutter-from-Cornwall-making-braindance-acid-electro shenanigans, but some serious vista-encompassing, new frontier-fording, universe-affirming, truly good music. Go buy yourself a copy now. And then another one for your sweet, deserving mother. *Brion Paul*

KERRI CHANDLER
TRIONISPHERE
King Street/US/CD

Kerri Chandler gets profoundly inside a groove and turns it inside out, with rich, bottom-heavy bass lines and sparse jazz melodies. He creates danceable moments of darkness infused with his NJ-native, garage-influenced, deep house perspective. Chandler's latest release, *Trionisphere*, much like many of the other legendary sonic productions he's most noted for, especially *The Atmosphere EP*, is a spiritual journey in sound. This man will take you to church on the dancefloor, and with the push of a button imbue you with the Holy Spirit. Opening with "Tribe of the Night," Chandler transports you back to those acid-house glory days, and the bouncy Latin rhythm and stuttering Afrobeat snares of "Coro" inspire you to jump up and testify. Overall, each tune is drenched with a hypnotic soulful quality. At times, though, the jazz tinges cause this offering to sound a little too laidback, but it's never boring. *Lynne d Johnson*

CHAMPION SOUL
EXCURSIONS
Life Line/US-JPN/CD

A Brooklyn broken-soul debut hits the ground running—fluttery congos and thumping bass glide beneath graceful and heartfelt vocals. Champion Soul breaks out of the broken beat box with a sound that's as ethereal as that of any of their UK associates. "Cancion" and "Por Que" features Mariana Vera's nouveau-bossa blues against a thick bed of organic percussion, as "Down Easy" breaks up the skanky, dubby mood with Kate Wyer's sultry soulful crooning. Though occasionally the lyrics and rhythms falter along trite, feel-good vibes, the larger portion of this disc swells with a visceral combination of body-moving broken syncopation and melodic sunny atmospheres. *Jon Weldon*

CIBELLE
Six Degrees/US/CD

Brazilian chanteuse Cibelle first came to prominence as the principal vocalist on Suba's seminal *Sao Paulo Confessions* LP. In the last two years, she's been busy with Brazilian producer Apollo 9 and a host of live musicians, working out her own musical agenda.

The resultant LP is as accomplished and alluring as you'd expect from a lady who has immersed herself in every kind of music from classical and jazz, Afro-Brazilian and electronic. Consciously detailed and elegantly refined, this is a captivating set of songs that seduce with their subtlety and mark out a serious new talent. *Paul Sullivan*

CHRIS CLARK
EMPTY THE BONES OF YOU
Warp/UK/CD

Fresh on the heels of his "Ceramics Is The Bomb" EP, Chris Clark digs deeper into the melodic IDM territory that Warp's not explored since Autechre's *Incunabula*, placing Clark in the surprising—if unenviable—spot of having Warp's best release in recent memory. A cracking first track, "Indigo Optimus" posits all the crunchiness of glitch programming, but reins it in under a harrowing, dark chord structure. Likewise, the title track plays deftly with spatial effects and punctuated ambience that suggests any number of post-industrial electronic artists, not Warp's usual navel-jazfing stock. In fact, *Empty* sounds a lot like L'Usine (American Jeff Mclwain), and that might be the highest compliment that can be paid Clark—and Warp—at this point. *Heath K. Hignight*

CURSE OV DIALECT
LOST IN THE REAL SKY
Mush/US/CD

Lost In The Real Sky puts Australia on the hip-hop map with a polyglot bang. Taking fellow Oz group the Avalanches' playful sampladelic spirit to much stranger places, Curse Ov Dialect's five core MCs/producers often cram more ideas into one track than many artists muster in their entire careers. *Lost* contains a dizzying range of musical styles, as well as multiple layers of ill subliminals; imagine the Bomb Squad's intricately crafted chaos informed by Nonesuch's Explorer Series and surrealism. The disc's panoply of conscious rappers with odd flows further spices this global melting pot. *Lost*'s kaleidoscopic data-OD is true next-level shit. *Dave Segal*

DAEDELUS
RETHINKING THE WEATHER
Mush/US/CD

Blending tapered-knicker nerdiness with hypermodern digital effects, So-Cal producer Daedelus is wedged between the Burberry-scarved world of Godard and the cyborg-dominated world of *Ghost in the Shell*. *Rethinking the Weather* is a pastiche of instrumentals from his 2002 release *The Weather*—for which Daedelus teamed up with the droll, space-cadet-ish emcees Busdriver and Radioinactive. *Rethinking* preserves *The Weather*'s characteristic zaniness, mixing cheesy Archies-style organ with driving thwicka-thwicka-boom percussion ("Dark Days"), lazy whistling ("Bright Star"), and children's toy instrumentals ("Name Game"). What results are instrumental remixes with as much narrative arch as the original cuts. *Rachel Swan*

DANGERMOURSE & JEMINI
GHETTO POP LIFE
Lex/UK/CD

Avoiding predictable radio friendly club pop(pin'), bicoastal producer Danger Mouse and Borough of Kings' MC Jemini the Gifted One celebrate hip-hop through rap. Dynamics and cadence aren't dictated by any one loop or the glorification of loot, but are rather an interchange of beats hittin' and Jemini spittin'. Danger Mouse's background in psychedelic pop and classical structure lets collages sway and stray as sounds find their own footing, while Jemini and guests Tha Liks, Pharcyde, Prince Po of Organized Konfusion and J-Zone help place *Ghetto Pop Life*'s feet firmly in the streets with relevant lyrics, not battle verses. This is an album of meticulous melody and eclectic lyrical dexterity that's nostalgic for Prim-meets-Hieroglyphics, yet not retro. *Tony Ware*

DEFARI
ODDS & EVENS
High Times/US/CD

If the Likwid crew is a family, then Defari is the second cousin. Fortunately, he's got enough rhyming skills to justify his familial pedigree. And this album does contain some good, though it is a bit derivative. Defari's straight-ahead multi-syllabic rhymes sound fairly Eminem-influenced, and he's also picked up a bad Kuruft-like habit of rhyming a word with itself—including rhyming "bitch" with "bitch." Production is of the thumping variety, mostly courtesy of Evidence and E-Swift, but featuring a Dre-like sound. The disc as a whole is a good listen—solid beats and rhymes all around—but it's not something that's gonna stick in your mind for very long. *Pete Babb*

DESORMAIS
IAMBROKENANDREMADEIAMBROKEN
Intr. version/CAN/CD

If looking for tangible clues regarding Mitchell Akiyama and Joshua Treble's duo Desormais, their name may not be the place to investigate. Translated from French as "henceforth," *Iambroken* likewise urges you to come to your own conclusions, using ambiguity as a convincing instrument of suspense. Deconstructed guitars sprawl across the album's length, evoking Fennesz, My Bloody Valentine and Oval. Among other things, however, appearances from A Silver Mount Zion's cellist Becky Foon and Hanged Up's drummer Eric Craven throw in enough sonic variation to keep the album a safe distance from either formula or mere mimicry. In a word: remote. And proud of it. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

ROSALIA DE SOUZA
GAROTA MODERNA
Avatar/US/CD

The breezy, lounge-chair bossa nova of Rosalia de Souza's debut album, *Garota Moderna*, conjures visions of a snuggly, '60s-era upper-class Rio de Janeiro: the stuff of careless romances, exotic coffee drinks, and Stan Getz tunes. Airy cymbals, breathy flutes and clement pentatonic piano solos combine with Souza's seductive "da da dee ditty doo doo" in the opening tracks "Maria Moita" and "Bossa 31," setting a tone that doesn't waver for the entire album. Like an ambient *fleur de lys*, *Garota Moderna* is ideal for cocktail parties, but its mild "blame it on the bossa nova" vibe is hardly an accurate characterization of Brazilian culture. *Rachel Swan*

DETALLES
SHAPES OF SUMMER
Traum/GER/CD

LA-based pianist Kate Simko and Chilean electronic-head Andres Bucci recently began collaborating as Detalles. Their debut album is a supple, minimalist tapestry of precision click-pop and plaintive piano and other acoustic instruments with a South American flair. "Rhodes Relejadass" has all the quietude required of most experimental electronic music, but Detalles mute the effects to produce a warmly wonderful cut. On the other hand, "Plus/Mas" brings with Akufen-ish uptempo pluck without succumbing to crass techno tendencies (likely due to John Tejada's mastering). Delightful in its execution, *Shapes* litts through themes in ways usually limited to classical compositions. *Heath K. Hignight*

DUDLEY PERKINS
A LIL' LIGHT
STARK REALITY
NOW
Stones Throw/US/CD

Dudley Perkins needs a good psychiatrist. On *A Lil' Light*, the LA MC releases his deepest sorrow and blues, and breaks down many of hip-hop's cliché macho postures in the process. Madlib's skewed and equally disturbed production helps crystallize Perkins's humane cries, which stand in deft contrast to the rest of hip-hop's commercial-saturated odes to Rocawear. On the other end of the spectrum, psych band Stark Reality floats above the Earth in their own Moog-heavy and percussive funk heaven. Two more fine pieces of music from Stones Throw. *Andrew Jones*

ELECTRONICAT
21ST CENTURY TOY
Disko B/GER/CD

Over the years, legions have done their best to fuse guitars with electronics, with few success stories. So, perhaps there's some irony involved when a Frenchman—a demographic long jeered for its

vain attempts at rock 'n' roll—has shown it can be done. And with panache. In fact, Fred Bigot makes it look so easy, you'll wonder why it hasn't been done before. Melding the swagger of Gary Glitter with the synth drone of Suicide and the motorik pulse of minimal techno and Faust, *21st Century Toy* is pure man-machine soul. Minus the soul. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

ELLEN ALLIEN
BERLINETTE 2003
Bpitch Control/GER/CD

Ellen Allien's second proper full length (after 2001's *Stadtkind* and last year's *Weiss Mix* CD) is one of the triumphs of the year. Battered beats spray skittle grease over a fatty backdrop of analog bass and smeared, oily chords, while Allien pushes her own voice, run through a thousand plug-ins, front-and-center in the mix, whispering, confessing, cajoling, comforting. The result is a dancefloor masterpiece (think: Two Lone Swordsmen) that offers intimate pop pleasures rivaling Barbara Morgenstern's *Nichts Muss*. Kompakt, New Order and Soft Pink Truth all provide reference points, but by the end of the album, Allien's demure booty techno sets a standard all its own. *Philip Sherburne*

EKKEHARD EHLERS
POLITIK BRAUCHT KEINEN FEIND
Staubgold/GER/CD

With its images of dissolute club-goers, the cover art and booklet of this latest release by Frankfurt's versatile Ekkehard Ehlers would seem at first glance to herald his return to the dance floor—hinting more at the aquatic techno of his Auch persona. Instead, this disc finds Ehlers creating his own form of drifting chamber music. On the first two pieces, Ehlers works with a single instrument—on "Maänder," a bass clarinet, on "Blind," a cello—whose sound he then manipulates, layers and distorts into surprisingly complex and richly evocative compositions. The final, extended piece, a mesmerizing, immersive drone called "Woolf Phase" is perhaps the least complex of the three, but is engrossing nonetheless. *Susanna Bolle*

EPIDEMIC MASSIVE
RATED E
III Productos/US/CD

These mindful LA wordsmiths rap about the plight of the underground MC—lack of funds, crap competition on the radio, etc.—with noble overtones. Their earthy beats and rhymes are delivered skillfully and with satisfying touches, like the acoustic guitar lick sampled on "Dedicated," vibes on "Classic," and the flute anxiously scratched up on "In This Life." The themes remain a bit predictable, and the Massive ones don't quite skirt the same originality as some of their underground brethren. Still, "Rated E" is a solid debut head-nodder from a talented crew. File next to J5. *Liz Cordingley*



MANITOBA UP IN FLAMES
Domino/US/CD

The cover art of *Up in Flames* features photos skewed through some hyper-color lens, staining all with a dense, polychrome psychedelic glow. It's perfect for Dan Snaith's second folktronic album, a shambling, delicately dazzling mess that sets off gorgeous pyrotechnics throughout. "Skunks"'s pastoral, fat twanging beat fills out with sizzling walls of ambience and a fluttering, free-skranking horn. "Hendrix with Ko" launches skywards with a Beach Boys ode, sunny harp and a big break, full of yellow gold rays bending at impossible angles, and ending with the super-catchiest rollicking handclap outro. For dizzying spirals you can ooh and aaah to, this album stuns and stuns again. Blaze on. *Selena Hsu*

KID ACNE

COUNCIL POP

Invisible Spies/UK/CD

When he's not busy drawing screaming dinosaurs and bong-smoking gods, London's Kid Acne is adding another face to the dodecahedron that is millennial British hip-hop. On *Council Pop*, our Kid teams up with fellow graffiti Req One (of Warp Records) for 12 tracks that owe a lot to the classic boom-bap of old school hip-hop but fuzz up the formula with electronic funk, glitchy editing, and cartoon touches. Kid's rapping is pretty straightforward, but the lyrics are clever and the end result sounds not unlike a UK equivalent of some Def Jux runners. Get out your markers, your backpacks and your knit hats, and get it on. *Vivian Host*



KING GEEDORAH

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

Big Dada/UK/CD

VIKTOR VAUGHN

VAUDEVILLE VILLAIN

Sound Ink/US/CD

MF Doom is possibly the dopest MC out right now. He's also neck-and-neck with Kool Keith in the Bugged-Out Alter Ego race. But most importantly, the guy consistently brings off-the-wall rhymes that will have you hitting rewind an awful lot. The concepts behind these two albums—the former a sci-fi social commentary, the latter deadpan comedy—fade to the back. All that matters is Doom is killing it. Production on both these albums is solid and unobtrusive, but for fans of clever, funny punchlines, the real value here is listening to Doom spit. *Pete Babb*

K.I.T.S AND P.I.T.S

K.I.T.S. 'N' P.I.T.S PRESENTS GUMBO

ISTS/US/CD

If titling an album *Gumbo* seems forced—lots of influences, we get it—it's forgivable when that album comes through, as this disc does. A collaboration between P.I.T.S (a.k.a. P.E.A.C.E. of Freestyle Fellowship) and his cousin K.I.T.S, the album blends styles so easily all you notice is the end result. From the stylistic, low-key consciousness of "Boyz N Da Hood (Watts Up)" to the bass-driven "Nervous Bomb" to my favorite, "D.S.L."—a tight pop culture catalogue, even punning off names of various Pokemon—the album serves up tracks that are intelligent without condescension, fun without pandering. *Luciana Lopez*

KIYO

CHAOTECH

Schematic/US/CD

First impressions can often mislead. Indeed, I still can't figure out what I was thinking when I first heard *Chaotech*. For some reason, at first listen, the quiet joys of Kiyo's shimmering, deftly textured electronics were lost on me. Thankfully, I eventually woke up to the subtle pleasures of this full-length debut by the Miami label's least abrasive adherent. Though the crunchy beats and machine-age clank that are Schematic's bread and butter are in plentiful supply, Kiyo is best when he's at his most abstract, creating warm, richly textured soundscapes that gradually coalesce into an undulating groove, rather than simply grounding them with a hip-hop beat. Most definitely worth a second look. *Susanna Bolle*

KRS-ONE

THE KRSTYLE

Koch-In the Paint/US/CD

The Johnny Appleseed of hip-hop edutainment strikes again, with scabrous boom-bap beats and lyrics about the upliftment of black-folk. We already have high expectations of KRS-One, not only to voice discontent over political situations, but to impart durable social truths. And granted, he holds it down in *The Krstyle*, particularly in the hard-hitting cut "Gunnen Em Down." On the flipside, this characteristically bristly MC regales us with the piano-ribboned, sensitive-guy number "The Only One," in which he uses verbal openness to pay homage to his wife. But never fear—in the other cuts, KRS-One returns to his typically pissed-off self. *Rachel Swan*



LAMB

WHAT SOUND

Koch/US/CD

It's a good thing the electronica-pop of *What Sound* re-asserts Lamb's position just enough outside genre classification to free them from popular whimsy, as this, their third album, was first released two years ago. Louise Rhodes's throaty crooning no longer threatens the angsty precipice but has settled into an even, comfortable yearning, while Andy Barlow's soundscapes have also mellowed away from drum & bass experimentation, yet still find more edge than the jazzy tendencies of their second album. In other words, Lamb still thrives on their famous strangeness but now with a friendly sort of transcendence. *Jon Weldon*

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

FREE-TIME

Pause-2/UK/CD

For the fans of the "little intimate lovelies" camp of electronic music, a gift of Maps and Diagrams. It's Solvent without the skitter: sheets of slender, tailored ambience and some non-intrusive but tastefully clever beats. Peaceable and pretty and non-effacing. "Do It

Yourself" has a nice sheen of very high-noted strands of honey. "Ideal" is a rock-a-bye lullaby, all sweet, rich melodies lovingly brushing up next to one another like lips against soft, sleeping shoulders. "Free-Time" rouses itself for "Reabsorb My Love"'s gently thudding static bass, and the upbeat skip of "Djur Hours" before returning to its original murmuring path. *Selena Hsu*

JACKIE MITTOO

CHAMPION IN THE ARENA 1976-1977

Blood & Fire/US/CD

The dear departed Jamaican keyboardist Jackie Mittoo is certainly one of the most influential figures in the back shadows of reggae, from his pioneering work with the Skatalites, as a tireless session man for Studio One, and of course as a maker of blissful dub grooves on his own in the mid-late '70s. It's boring to write about Blood & Fire, though the music never is. Every release is flawless, with excellent liner notes, layout, great sound and perfect selections—here culled from Mittoo's best period. The organ is warm and engulfing, the Bunny Striker Lee rhythms are dubby with a funky feel—this might just be the best compilation in existence for lovers of Jackie Mittoo's sound. *Jesse Terry*

MOGWAI

HAPPY SONGS FOR HAPPY PEOPLE

Matador/US/CD

Mogwai returns with a fourth album that exchanges its trademark post-rock traversals between so loud and so soft for a sweeter, subtler sound without dropping any intensity. It's an enormous close-up of a heartbeat: for all of its steadiness, the secret thump and pump of blood through Mogwai's innermost chambers nevertheless fascinates with each swell. "Killing All the Flies" expands in a molten aortic flow, heavy and thick with ephemeral, glowing heat; and "Ratts of the Capital" explodes in a furious, full-body guitar flush. Wrap your arms around Mogwai's chest and press your ear close. *Selena Hsu*

PHILL NIBLOCK

TOUCH FOOD

Touch/UK/CD

Though composer Phill Niblock may have cut his teeth in the New York avant-garde of the 1960s, his work is more influential than ever, with his exploration of the power of overtones influencing numerous young musicians, such as Oren Ambarchi and Rafael Toral. With this two-CD set, his second release on the UK imprint Touch, Niblock dishes up three typically immense compositions, any one of which is enough to satisfy those hungry for dense, Niblockian drones. As always, the apparent stillness of Niblock's pieces belies an almost unearthly complexity, as layer upon layer of harmonic fields shift and change, and yet somehow stay the same. Transcendent. *Susanna Bolle*



TUJIKO NORIKO

FROM TOKYO TO NAIAGARA

Tomlab/GER/CD

With this, her third solo album, Mego's favorite (and only) glitch-chanteuse Tujiko Noriko steps out with Cologne's Tomlab to deliver a relatively straightforward record of lightly tweaked electronic pop. Her partner in melodic crime here is

producer Aki Onda, whose warm production simultaneously oozes and crackles around Noriko's subtly ethereal vocals. Of course, Noriko is no mere sweet-voiced pushover (as has been more than evident on her previous Mego releases), and her sensuously eccentric lyrics (mostly in Japanese with a little English interspersed) are thankfully devoid of saccharine sentimentality. They're sweetly evocative to be sure, but even as she sings of love, loss, zippers and robots, she assures us: "I cry for no one." Independence has rarely been so lovely. *Susanna Bolle*

PEDRO

PEDRO ALBUM

Melodic/UK/CD

You're supposed to be so very impressed by the super-cool album artwork from Shynola, which, admittedly, is pretty. Ah, but the music itself: it's rich, multi-faceted majesty, it's flowing tapestries of enveloping aural bliss, causing all incestuous in-crowd considerations to reveal their ultimately empty nature. Sounding not unlike an amalgam of Four Tet's 1999 album *Dialogue* and some summery micro-house, James Rutledge's starting points are, not surprisingly, the same, (i.e. hip-hop, 2-step, jazz and 20th century classical). But from within this palette, Pedro manages to deftly create a perennial blooming garden of intrigue all his own, steeped in pure vision. *Brian Paul*

POLE

POLE

Mute/US/CD

For all the conception behind this disc, it makes good background music for Saturday brunch at home. Berlin's Pole has cooked up a new series consisting of two previous releases that merge into this self-titled full-length. Here, Ohio rapper Fat Jon's urgent spoken-word vocals now appear on the four tracks that made up Pole's "45/45" EP, as well as an opener "Slow Motion" from Pole's "90/90" single. Sly percussive change-ups, soft melodic tones, and, at times, live sax and upright bass, combine to create a techno/hip-hop hybrid that will appeal to IDM/downtempo fans. Three out of four brunchers didn't mind it either. *Liz Cordingley*



Anthony B

ANTHONY B

STREET KNOWLEDGE

VP/US/CD

Can roots sentiments survive in a digital age? Yes, Rasta, according to Anthony B. The often-controversial artist proves he's still brimming with fiery inspiration, even while his spars Capleton and Sizzla seem to have fallen off. *Street Knowledge* makes a pretty convincing argument that Anthony B is indeed "Da Real Ting," keeping the pressure up with essential reality lyrics. Not only does he forward the sufferah cause in dis generation, but he does so over state-of-the-art beats without losing an iota of dignity. 'Nuff highlights, from the righteous club-banger "Clean Your Heart," to the defiant anti-brutality anthem "Police," to updates of dancehall and roots classics "Tempo," "Pass the Kutchie," and "Two Sevens Clash." Shottas, take heed: there's no mistaking the clarity of the lead track, "God Above Everything," which urges a return to spirituality in the bling-bling era. *Eric K. Arnold*

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CAR PAINT SCHEME

Warp/UK/CD

As Brooklynites in mesh trucker caps continue to make odder and odder showy hip-hop joints, there's something more alluringly unnerving in the insular loping clatter of Req. With no shortage of releases over the years for myriad labels, *Car Paint Scheme* comes across achingly fresh. Album opener "Runout Scratches" seduces with its hypnotic swirling haze of an entrance to Req's world. What follows are all sorts of hip-hop spinouts, from lyrical inventiveness with Kid Acne on "Style Mentorz" to some old school disco hip-hop on "Train Jam." Roll that jalopy's windows down and rock this *Car Paint Scheme*. *Brion Paul*

ARUNDHATI ROY

COME SEPTEMBER

AK Press-Alternative Tentacles/US/CD

At a time when liberals the world over are falling in line with the Bush Administration's atrocious state practices that get called the "War on Terrorism," the voice of Arundhati Roy is needed, and needed badly. Roy is unafraid to break with both liberal and left pieties, whereas most commentators shuffle their feet and avoid confronting "merely political" issues that hurt, devalue, and cheapen people's lives. Tackling so-called "multiculturalism," Roy speaks to the ways that a politics of "tolerance" assumes the other person is intolerable to begin with. One of Roy's most startling images is this statement about nationalism: "Flags are bits of colored cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap people's brains and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead." Her poetic and political powers are inseparable. *Tim Haslett*

S.A. SMASH

SMASHY TRASHY

Definitive Jux/US/CD

If Def Jux is running the indie rap school, these guys have D-hall on lockdown. Their dirty, shoulder-shakin' bounce-bounce what-wat take may offend some backpack beatniks. After years of getting crunk

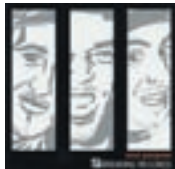
with college kids in Columbus, Ohio, S.A. Smash duo Camu Tao and Metro immortalize their no-consequences tours with odes to booze, blunts and bitches. El-P provides beats 'n' soul on "lily"; Aesop Rock raps sexy on "Love to Fuck." But the summer anthem for the sloshed has got to be "Get Home" ("How'm I Gon' Get Home?"). Not for the self-righteous, this party schtick is funny if you let it be. *Liz Cordingley*

SLOWPHO

HOTEL SLEEP

Water Music/US/CD

From the first track to the last, *Hotel Sleep* is a stunning blend of styles and a confident debut, weaving jazz and classical influences with breakbeat, downtempo, drum & bass and minimal techno beats. The Norwegian duo of Christian Watkins (beats) and Hilde Drange completely avoids beginner's pitfalls, with complex production, lush strings and icy melodies on par with Björk's best work. Drange's vocals evoke Joni Mitchell (Sarah McLaughlin?) in their jazzier moments and Portishead at others, gracefully weaving through Watkins arrangements. *Hotel Sleep* kicks your ass in many ways, drawing you in immediately with beautiful songs and keeping you there with a hypnotic, subtle complexity. *Jesse Terry*



SOUL PURPOSE

BREAKING RECORDS

Coup d'Etat Entertainment/US/CD

Hip-hop trio Soul Purpose marks an auspicious debut with this album, a broad-ranging collection, including tracks like the battle rhyme "Take Cover," "The Other White Meat," the stark indictment of justice system abuse, and the string-backed "I Stay Busy." The group—MC Mazzi and production duo Concepts and Zvi—craft an album of bold horns and an old-school style they update freely. Minus the excessive interludes (seven, plus an intro and an outro, complete with sappy kid) and the rather dull title track, the album works both as a whole and piecemeal, and promises even more in the future. *Luciana Lopez*

SPEEDRANCH^JANSKY NOISE

MI^GRATE

THE GASMAN

REMEDIAL

Planet μ/UK/CD

The two latest missives from the crowded Planet-μ (home to Luke Vibert, μ-Ziq, Hellfish and Venetian Snares) demonstrate perfectly that Mike Paradinas's label can be invaluable one second and infuriating the next. Speedranch^Jansky Noise—equally at home in music magazines seemingly at polar opposites of the spectrum, *Kerrang* and *The Wire* (who put him on the cover)—is proud of the havoc his sample-laden and static packed cut 'n' paste wares recently wreaked on a London audience. Complaints ranged from nausea and motion sickness through to difficulties staying upright. The Gasman is an entirely different proposition. He indulges the label's penchant for nostalgia—revisiting the Belgian techno and breakbeat hardcore prevalent in the mid '90s—but envelops it amidst piano samples and dense orchestral swathes, pinched from recordings of European classical music. Superb. Absurd. They planet all. *Dave Stenton*

SUSTAINER

CUANTICO

Italic/GER/CD

Infusing electronic music with an artistic aesthetic is certainly a more cultured production approach—but it doesn't guarantee great music. A nod to what his label calls "new Spanish Modernism," Barcelona's Alex "Sustainer" Alarcon models his stark tech-house after the same Basic Channel-styled grooves so recognizably purveyed by his German distributor, Kompakt. Yet while Alarcon's ambition is clear, *Cuatico* bears telltale signs of a novice producer. The keen rhythmic drive that distinguishes most Kompakt artists is lacking here, and frustratingly, Alarcon's progressions are so subtle that his promising pieces sound flatly monotonous. Artistically speaking, more a collection of beat studies than a finished collection. *Janet Tzou*



TONY THOMAS

21ST CENTURY DUB

Soma/UK/CD

Towards the end of those warehouse days of glory, some DJs played a chunky mix of beats—stripped down and tribal, with an organic funk and an unrelenting assault of bongos. Tony Thomas's debut album for Soma hearkens back to that tribal house heyday with its steady pulse, echoes of African chants, and those ever-present bongos. Thomas's is a toughened up version—sleeker and techier, and as the title suggests, he hasn't forgotten the bassline. The CD (unlike the LP) is a constant mix, and while the tracks tend to all mine the same vein, as dancefloor material it's perfect. Put it on and sweat. *Joe Rice*

BUNNY WAILER

RETROSPECTIVE

CRUCIAL! ROOTS CLASSICS

Ras/US/CD

Overshadowed by both Bob Marley and Peter Tosh during their lifetimes, original Wailer Bunny gets his due on two new Ras collections. *Retrospective*, which covers about a ten-year span, from the late '70s to late '80s, can officially be called a greatest hits disc, the strength of which lies in Wailer's stylistic range. From bubblin' Bunny ("Cool Runnings") to rockin' Rasta ("Roots, Radics, Rockers, Reggae") to social commentator ("Liberation") to inspired romantic ("Love Fire") to Nyahbinghi traditionalist ("Time Will Tell") to modern rootsman ("Dance Hall Music"), the singer shows a versatility and consistency few artists in the genre can match. *Crucial!*, on the other hand, plays like a Jamaican version of the History Channel. There's a socioeconomic context behind almost every lyric—yet the continued relevance of songs like "Innocent Blood," "Power Strugglers," and "Boderation" underscore the *ital-ity* of Wailer's message. *Eric K. Arnold*

WHY?

OAKLANDAZULASYLUM

DOSH

Anticon/US/CD

Two members of the Bay Area-based Anticon collective rhythmically reminisce. *Oaklandazulasyllum* is one of Anticon's most accomplished outings—why?'s nasal staggered phrasing evokes They Might Be Giants as folktronic backpack hip-hop. Where why? prefers shuffling strum and non-sequiturs through veering vignettes, fellow coalition member Dosh (percussionist of Ninja Tune's Fog) favors sweater-weather sampler strut on his debut. Wrapping cluttered basement breaks in Rhodes rolls, woolen static and pensive piano chime, Dosh makes like Linus at a low-point, weaving wistful and whimsical instrumentals, paired down on symphonics but with the shambolic grace of his other gig. *Tony Ware*

XRAY

MONSTA MIXES 2

Mindbenda/US/CD

Arguably the most lyrically devastating crew in hip-hop today, the Monsta Island Czars have evolved from mysterious MF Doom associates to an unstoppable rap powerhouse. Building on the success of their classic debut *Escape From Monsta Island*, chief beat-maker Xray hits us with another 20-track collection featuring remixes, exclusive new joints, and unearthed gems from the vaults. There's not a bad track on here, from the hypnotic guitar-laced jump-off "Witchcraft Remix" to the subdued closer "Covert Op" by Darcmind. With team captain Jet Jaguar back from upstate, and multiple solo albums on deck, the Czars's takeover is just beginning. *Brolin Winning*

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SEÑOR COCONUT

FIESTA SONGS

Emperor Norton/US/CD

Uwe Schmidt a.k.a. Atom Heart is getting the *baile* started quickly with his latest Latin adventure. Now a full band enhanced by Schmidt's trusty G4, Señor Coconut tears through meringues, cha-cha-chas and mambos. But wait, what's that riff on the timbales and vibra-phone? It's every new guitar player's favorite—Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water." Then it's "Riders on the Storm" gone merengue under a hot sunset, "Oxygene (Part II)" for the epic backyard volleyball game, and a percussive, superheated version of the Gloved One's "Beat It"—seriously! By now, we don't question Atom, we just let him grab the band and get to swingin', as they do on the raucous original closer "Electrolatino." *Rob Geary*

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BRANCHES AND ROUTES: A FATCAT RECORDS COMPILATION *Fat Cat/US/2CD*

In these very fragmented late-capitalist days, it seems record labels may not be as different from clothing labels as we may like to think. Not defined "simply by putting out what's good," labels increasingly cater to very particular tastes, dictated by ever-specialized demographics and transient in-sounds. But as the line between fashionista and record geek slims, certain labels—Soul Jazz, Warp, Smalltown Supersound and Lo Recordings, among others—are able to straddle this tenuous divide with splendor.

Defined less by an allegiance to a characteristic sound than a level of quality, London's Fat Cat has found a way over its six-year existence to please both parties with nary a compromise. If some of the world's most fashionable artists are on their roster (and nearly all of them seem to be Icelandic)—Björk, Sigur Rós, Múm, Autechre—they've rarely been apprehensive about releasing other challenging (read: uncommercial) sounds, often via their excellent *Split* and *Splinter* series. These include Alejandra & Aeron, Programme, DAT Politics, Fonn, Motion, Pimmon and Janek Shaeffer. Fat Cat come out clean on the other side due to a sheer diversity of sound and vision. Ask yourself how many labels would release a CD like *No Watches*, *No Maps*, which gathered demos of unsigned artists that Fat Cat couldn't release so that those artists could gain deserved label interest? Answer: very few.

As a sampling of the Fat Cat's 20-odd albums and countless other odd audio documents, *Branches & Routes* does a fine job

of outlining the label's open-minded approach. David Grubbs (ex-Gastr Del Sol) opens the album with a question: "Are you ready/For a cold wash rag?" A strange label decree, perhaps, but Fat Cat have always combined their pointed taste with a shrewd sense of humor. Over the remainder of the two-CD set, we're treated to rarities from Matmos (the first CD appearance of "Freak N You," which in 2001 suggested what would become Soft Pink Truth, and which is undoubtedly one of their best tracks yet), Fennesz (the *Endless Summer*-like "Badminton Girl"), Sigur Rós and Kid 606, as well as previously available album tracks from Múm, Mice Parade, Set Fire to Flames and Black Dice, among others.

Despite such relative stardom, the collection's strongest tracks come from relative unknowns. Stromba's "Invisible Stink" is dark jazz-funk that suggests Miles Davis and Arthur Russell remixed by Nightmares on Wax on heavy weed. Frenchman Dorine Muraille's "Dopees," released on his *Mani* album, still stands as one of the year's most beautifully fractured songs. And Grain's "Untitled 3" sounds like Sutekh and Safety Scissors soundclashing with Akufen.

Though there are no contributions from Hilmar Orn Hilmarsson, Pan Sonic, Req, Various Artists or V/VM, *Branches & Routes* stands nonetheless as a fine introduction to the Fat Cat aesthetic. If it's a bit safe or fashionable for the seasoned record trawler, the fact remains: Fat Cat is an impressive example of art and commerce getting along, an example many would be wise to observe.

Alexis Georgopoulos



OUT PATIENTS 3
Hospital/UK/CD

London-based drum & bass and future jazz stalwart Hospital Records unleashes a stellar take on futuristic rhythm-twisting with a high-gloss finish. Assembled by label manager Chris Goss, *Out Patients 3* moves unabashedly from frantic, Latin-touched broken beat (on Ultrasound's killer "Latin ") to dark, eerie beats-and-bass workouts (Chris Finguz & Siobhan Gallagher's "Why Do We Do?") and cerebral head-nodders (Infekto's "My Groove") without batting an eyelash. Keep an ear out for a few killer remixes along the way—High Contrast's dancefloor anthem "Return of Forever" gets a bright, tropical sheen from Swell Sessions, and Stateless's treatment of London Elektriccity's floor-filler "Wishing Well" turns the track into a fractured, dubbed-out tune with glimpses of vocals and crisp drum patterns working their way to the top. Absolutely essential listening for those searching for the future of drum & bass. *Christine Hsieh*

4 YEARS

Wabi/CAN/CD
Canadian design firm Wabi digs on all things minimal—both in music and graphic imagery. *4 Years* is a retrospective of microtech music created mostly by Canadian producers for use in Wabi's live sight-and-sound events. Artists such as Fairmont, and British Columbia's Nassau weave subtle mumbled vocals and steady throbbing sequences, while Polmo Polpo's "Losing My Tentacles" blurs numerous post-techno and ambient subgenres, anchoring them to beats that escape from funk's humid regions to cooler climates. Dub is an essential ingredient throughout, and this collection reverberates with all the Jamaican flourishes you can muster out of its curt frequencies. Wabi's ability to pimp excellence from an international gamut of minimalists is a sign that a label may be imminent. *Andrew Jones*

AURAL FLOAT PRESENTS SPACE NIGHT VOL. IX

Elektrlux/GER/CD
By the late 1990s, the terms "downtempo" and "chillout" became synonymous with flat, coffeehouse-friendly dreck peddled to the masses under such titles as *Ibiza Beach*, *Pure Moods* and related swill. Despite that, there *is* good chill music out there, evidenced by the ninth volume of the German *Space Night* series curated by Elektrlux artist Aural Float. The two-CD set has its share of obligatory filler tracks, but contains new works by veteran artists such as The Orb, the Black Dog and Funki Porcini as well as contributions from Röyksopp and Pascal FEOSS. Heavy on vaporous atmospheres, lush synthetics and stargazing moods, it's a good musical accompaniment for getting extremely high. *Tim Pratt*



BAD COMPANY
EGYPTIAN
Greensleeves/US/CD
Dancehall continues its *Diwali*-like trend away from stabbing two-beat jump up towards more fluid syncopation with the shuffling snake-charming sexiness of the *Egyptian* riddim, while *Bad Company* keeps it ruffneck via metallic two-beat stabs and wobbly, jittery horns. Accordingly, *Egyptian*'s Arabic mood results in girl talk across the board, most visibly Elephant Man's "Egyptian Dance" and Sean Paul's "Get With It Girl," while *Bad Company*'s minimalism begs a wider scope, going from Beenie Man's catchy "Row Like A Boat" to Buju's anti-violence "People & People" to Frisco Kids's militant altertation. Both riddims are catchy and compelling, but *Bad Company* elicits the more inspired wordplay. *Jon Weldon*

BE ARISONABLE

Arison/UK/CD
Be Arisonable charts the evolution of Arison, the label established by Italy's Simone Serritella (one half of Ubiquity act Cuica), a highly regarded jazz/broken beat producer. In keeping with London's leading broken beat club night, Co-op, it's dominated by exclusives (seven out of ten tracks are previously unreleased). The contributions from the most celebrated names involved here are well deserving of the plaudits: both Domu and 4hero's Marc Mac opt for forward-thinking, yet floor-friendly songs. The former favors a killer, bass-heavy staccato groove, whilst the latter demonstrates that house music's still a potent force in the right hands. Fittingly, Serritella himself detonates the biggest downtempo bomb, "Reminisin'," a deceptively simple track that, although half-paced, deserves full marks. *Dave Stenton*

BOYZ REVENGE: A RESPONSE TO THE TOXIC GIRLS!

Tsunami Addiction/FRA/CD
In the techno-pop-punk ultra-future, there will be no Boyzone or N'Sync—boy stars will have names like Folktrott, dDamage and Animal. At least, that's the world envisioned through the crystal ball of this compilation, a follow-up to Tsunami Addiction's November 2002 *Toxic Girls* release. Cheesy bedroom stars from France, England, the USA and Canada plunder the troughs of New Romantic, Casiotone pop, garage rock and indie twee to create a genre-fuck 21-track assemblage that is sometimes difficult, often endearing, and never short on personality. Get ready to rip down your Aaron Carter posters when this group of boyz comes to town. *Vivian Host*

DJ SUV: LATIN DRUM'N'BASS MIX

DMC/US/CD
SAMBASS: BRAZILIAN STYLE DRUM & BASS
Cuadra/US/CD

Nothing's hotter than juxtaposition, and soft Portuguese vocals over a gut-rumbling bassline and thick beat do it every time. Heads should give SUV's DMC outing a whirl. The Reprazent-ative packs his mix with his own exclusives as well as tracks by J. Magick, Max de Castro, Total Science, Special Forces, and Smith & Mighty. It's all good, but less focused on the Latin elements and more broadly on D&B with R&B and island styles playing parts. *Sambass*, on the other hand, while unmixed, collects the best of the Brazilian angle in a sultry and palatable package. Drumagick turns in highlights with "Easy Boom" and "Funquiada" featuring Max de Castro, whose "Pra Voce Lembrar" remixed by Patife is bumpin' with romance. London Elektriccity, Landslide, XRS, Cosmonautics, and High Contrast also make the bossa disc more my bag. *Liz Cordingley*



DJ HEATHER: DANCEFLOOR PRINCIPLES
Nordic Trax/CAN/CD

Chicago house fixture DJ Heather is arguably one of the city's top commodities—and for good reason. Her blend of hard-hitting, bass-heavy house fills dancefloors the world over, and she retains an uncompromising underground feeling that conjures up images of dark, humid loft parties. *Dancefloor Principles* neatly captures her live sets (without the sweat and stale beer, of course), pouring the liquid funk and dark, dubby soul of producers like J.T. Donaldson, Lawnchair Generals and East Coast Boogiemen through the home-car stereo speakers without missing a beat. *Christine Hsieh*

ERICK MORILLO: SUBLIMINAL SESSIONS 5

Subliminal/US/CD
On the fifth installment of this label's mix series, Subliminal owner Morillo pulls out some old-school business and mixes it up with some new stuff. Morillo's emphasis is definitely on moving the floor, and any mix that kicks off with "Relight My Fire" by Dan Hartman is welcome, especially when it's followed by Jeanette Thomas's crucial jack track "Shake Your Body." However, the current penchant for all things acid-tinged and old-school in the house realm only amplifies the fact that the music form hasn't really moved on that much since the mid-'90s, and a comparison of Morillo's choice of new tunes to the classics really brings this home. Thumbs up for the classics-heavy selection, but some of us want to move forward. *Chris Orr*

FATI IS 5

Fat/UK/CD
Paul Arnold's weekly Chew The Fat event in Brixton's Bug Bar is one of the UK's original breakbeat institutions. Anyone who's anyone in the British breaks scene has passed through its famously cavernous interior at some point. This anniversary selection tastefully sidesteps being an obvious collection of anthems, and instead concentrates on the more eclectic, funky vibe that Fat! is known for. Solid acts like The Apollo Kids, Peacemaker, Hedrock Valley Beats, Jef Dam and Vandalz Inc provide the expected peaks and troughs, creating an honest and generally infectious profile of the club. *Paul Sullivan*

FERTILE GROUND: REMIXED

Counterpoint/UK/CD
Earning plaudits from London's soul jazz cognoscenti, this Baltimore group's infectious use of Afro-Caribbean rhythms has made them a favorite of those on a syncopated slant, evidenced here by their remixers. Kaidi Tatham turns in an ambitious, tempo-dividing version of "Spiritual War," maintaining careful détente with Navasha Daya's vocals. Her powerful voice does get the best of Avro on "The Moment," however, especially in comparison to Seiji's shuffling funk version. Jazztronik's "Peace & Love" channels Zero dB with batacua-laden flavor, and Waiwan's "Take Me Higher" is a brilliant bit of future jazz. Worthy companions to the originals. *Joe Rice*

FOLK, JAZZ & POETRY

Irma/ITA/CD
Pretty typical programming here: Maria Muldaur, Michael Jackson, 4hero, all the usual suspects. Ummm...excuse me? This compilation plays a bit like a mix tape made just before sunrise after a few too many, but selector Matteo Sola manages to (mostly) pull it off. By attempting to draw lines between evergreen troubadour Terry Callier's "Keep Your Heart Right," Stereolab's kaleidoscopic "Percolator," and the previously mentioned Jackson's take on "People Make the World Go 'Round," Sola provides a mildly loud soundtrack just fine for people-watching at a sidewalk café. *Peter Nicholson*

GERD: MODIFIED

Life Enhancing Audio/NETH./CD
Gerd graces us with an ostensibly insider concept that works for the masses. *Gerd.Modified* is a compilation of Gerd remixes, other artists remixing Gerd, and Gerd remixing themselves. All Gerd all the time works, though. The beauty of *Modified* lies in the imaginative inclusion of throwback instruments such as flute and flugelhorn, accentuating the sensuous melodies sliding through virtually every track. Vocals are given special attention here, to especially good effect with Alissa Kuecker on "Shine," as well as the Brasilia-tinged "Tesao." "Onkel Joe," a '70s German jazz classic, undergoes a Latin makeover with a bit of 5/4 beat thrown in—just one of the tricks in the Gerd arsenal. *Margaret Murray*

GILLES PETERSON: GP04

TrustTheDJ/UK/CD
Swiss-made, London-based Gilles Peterson survived radio piracy and stashing vinyl booty over 20 years ago to feed his adoration of soul, jazz and hip-hop forms into GP04. With characteristic precision, Peterson selects a superfluity of artists who buck profiles. Peterson opens with Gallic abstract beats from DJ Vadim-produced TTC and the Latin posturing of Headtric featuring Joshua Baumgarten. Philly's King Britt (feat. Quasimoto), LA's The Rebirth, and Detroit Experiment represent the best of US smooth tempos with a bit o' bite. Troubleman, Beatfanatic and Mr. Spock drop mighty bounce, and the highlight of this collection is the LTJ Experience's sambasized remix of Japan's "Studio Apartment." *Stacy Meyn*



GLOBALISTA: IMPORT-EXPORT
Trikont/GER/CD

For ears accustomed to steady beats and English-language tunes, listening to sounds from places like Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia can be at times enlightening and sometimes confusing. *Globalista* aims to bring global sounds together in accessible, photography-splashed packages, and it succeeds—to an extent. The majority of the tunes on here—party-ready sounds from popular African group Poisson D'Avril, Chilean band Pánico and the surprisingly bling-bling Turkish pop-hop of Erkekler Yüzünden—are intriguing listens, but the vast array here is a bit too far-flung to cohere. Still, the incredible energy of the songs on this disc is nothing if not inspiring. *Christine Hsieh*

JAMES ZABIELA: SOUND IN MOTION

Hooj/UK/CD
Once in a while you run across an unknown DJ who rocks your ass off and you wonder, "Why is he/she still toiling in obscurity?" No such questions came to mind, however, while listening to the UK label Hooj's latest *Sound In Motion* compilation, mixed by James Zabiela. OK, there's some nice track selection (funky electro here, bumping tech-house there), but Zabiela seems so bent on making the monotone beats match up, things don't get moving till halfway through both CDs. And at that point, who cares? *Sound* is by no means a bad set, but at more than 140 minutes, it should grab me by the neck or ass. It does neither. *Tim Pratt*

JOSH WINK PROFOUND SOUNDS VOL. 2

System/US/CD
A former pop star abroad, Philly's Josh Wink has plummeted back to Earth as merely a competent producer of old-school acid trax and a supreme selector of psychedelic, minimalist tech-house. This strong follow up to 1999's *Profound Sounds Vol. 1* DJ-mix disc resembles Richie Hawtin's *DES*; both use Final Scratch technology to personalize each track in the mix. So when you freak out to cuts on *Profound Sounds Vol. 2* by Johannes Heil, Dave Clarke, Villalobos, Timeblind and Swayzak, you're actually hearing Wink's tailor-made retooling of them. The bonus CD contains four Wink-produced tracks from vinyl-only releases and video footage. *Dave Segal*

LARRY GOLD PRESENTS DON CELLO AND FRIENDS

Rapster-BBE/US/CD
Larry Gold has been around the block (at least a bunch of Philly blocks), arranging strings, producing and playing cello and working with artists on many past and present hits, including the Roots and Justin Timberlake and classics like the O'Jays and Gamble & Huff. The personnel on his *Don Cello* reads like a who's who of Philly's Black Lily scene, represented by people like Jaguar Wright, Floetry, Kindred and members of the Roots laying down silky vocals and tight rhymes. The string-laden neo soul is interesting in either a dance-friendly, contemporary R&B fashion or syrupy ballad style—it just doesn't seem to have staying power in the CD player like Gold's work on other people's albums. *Jesse Terry*

LATIN SOUL FUSION VOLUME 2

Clubstar/GER/CD
Daniel Klein, boss of the Mallorca-based Flamingo Discos imprint, was an obvious choice to handpick the best in house-styled Latino grooves. Klein has put together a selection which stands out for its musicality and tangible live instrumentation. Solid Groove Productions' "Keep It There" holds things in the right place, courtesy of spiraling strings, a preoccupied harmonica and a dazzling sax. Axwell remixes Elements of Soul's "Head Above Water" into a sub-aqua gem, where buoyant keys act as a float for hopeful strings and submerged vocals that question the partner's commitment. A delightful, summery collection. *Jon Freer*



LIVE @ WOMB CHRISTIAN SMITH (THE SOUND OF TRONIC TREATMENT)

Womb/UK/CD
Question for Mr. Smith: We know you can get super-nasty on the decks, so do we really need to hear the self-aggrandizing applause from your crowd to further confirm what we already know? Recorded live at Tokyo's Womb, complete with enthusiastic audience participation (and some annoying audio feedback), *Live @ Womb* is a raucous ride through wicked techno and funky tech-house territory. Every track is pure floor-demolishing heaven. It has its audio flaws, but they add to the magic. *Womb...* is live and spontaneous and Smith massages a tune just right. *June Joseph*

LOST ON ARRIVAL

Naked Music/US/CD
Naked Music, purveyors of elegant, yet visceral vocal house, decides to take a leftfield detour, taking hints from their three-volume *Carte Blanche* series. Not all the tracks are stormers, but there are more than enough highlights courtesy of the likes of Chicken Lips, Trentemoller and Morgan Geist. If *Lost...* is a taste of things to come from Naked, this could herald a new and exciting phase. Here's to innovation and huge, dangly cojones! *June Joseph*

LUNATICWORKS VOL. 3: LOADED MUSIC FOR LOADED MINDS

LunaticWorks/US/CD
With many labels as independent as Fox these days (read: the furthest limb of some giant sprawling media empire), it's nice to see unknown musicians finding a home on truly independent imprints. LunaticWorks's third volume serves up nine tunes by nine newcomers (many set to deliver full-lengths soon), and spans most bedroom producer styles and tempos. George Katsiris's "1er Cru" rides a loping groove, with harp and bass sliding against each other in a concise summary of sampler cool. Fruitbat's "Zenuba" goes in the other direction, mashing distorted darkcore bass against hectic breaks in a 13-minute jungle epic of the mind. *Rob Geary*



NICE UP THE DANCE: TWO WORLDS CLASH
Soul Jazz/UK/CD

Revisiting the Jamaican music diaspora in novel ways has become Soul Jazz's stock in trade, and they do it very well. This collection spotlights the crossover between hip-hop and dancehall, Jamaica and the US. Cuts like Tenor Saw's classic "Ring the Alarm" transformed to a hip-hop beat, Cutty Ranks's slashing gangsta-style lyrical attacks, Ms. Thing's hip-hop soul backing up a dancehall flow, and J Live riding an Augustus Pablo melodica harmony give you an idea of what's up here. But this is more than a bunch of jacked beats; it's a reflection of a symbiotic relationship, pointing out how each culture periodically energizes and inspires the other. *Matt Fisher*

PATHAAN: STONED ASIA MUSIC PRESENTS WORLD PEACE

Stoned Asia/UK/CD
DJ CHEB I SABBABH: AS FAR AS
Six Degrees/US/CD
Respected London global beats DJ Pathaan weighs in with this fluid mix of tracks from the likes of Fun-Da-Mental, MIDival Punditz, Cosmic Rocker and the Dum Dum Project. All rep the Stoned Asia tag well, but my favorite, Cosmic Rocker's "Sandblasted"—a heavy dub issue with wicked toasts and shout-outs on top of an intoxicating groove—closes the CD with an exclamation point. San Francisco producer Cheb I Sabbabh displays his quality selector skills on his new DJ mix release. Featuring Asian Dub Foundation, Natacha Atlas and a surprising remix of Don Cherry, *As Far As* ranges from the driving drum & bass of Gnawa Impulse's "Lahillah Express" to a distinct African influence on Sekouba Bambino's "Sinikan." Although Sabbabh's effort is a little more ambitious than *World Peace*, and consequently not quite as consistent, both CDs represent some very fine work, and neither will disappoint. *Rob Riddle*

PRIMA NORSK 2

Beatservice/NOR/CD
There is a general perception that the Norwegians make electronic music that's reserved and polite. True as that may be at times, this selection of tasty little nuggets from Beatservice shows that there can be an edgier side to the Scandinavian sound. DJ Nils Noa steers us through cuts by Gork ("Sun Sets In Sector 5"), Bermuda Triangle ("Mooger Fooger"), veteran Bjorn Torkse ("Opp I Ura"), Kahuun ("Marinade") and many others, ensuring that for every innocuous, well-behaved tune, there are plenty of willfully leftfield vibes and fluid, spacey beat noir. *Paul Sullivan*



ROUGH TRADE SHOPS-POST PUNK 01
Mute/UK/CD

If you're under 30 and experiencing the "new" disco punk movement for the first time, this is a perfect compendium, to educate yourself on what happened in the early '80s, the brief merger that's now heading into its official revival. You may have heard of bands like Gang of Four, Scritti Politti and Liquid Liquid under your youth (all of whom appear here), but it's those under-the-radar cuts, like Maximum Joy's "Stretch" and Delta 5's "Mind Your Own Business," that fully flesh out this enduring relationship between rocking and grooving. *Tamara Palmer*

SALIM RAFIQ: SOUND OFF

Fuel/UK/CD
The first part of this CD encapsulates the Fuel Records sound, with 12 tracks mixed by Fuel god Salim Rafiq. For those unfamiliar with this unique brand of breakbeat, expert minimal, bass-heavy breaks that ooze with a style that's rarely duplicated by producers outside of the Fuel camp. To mitigate this lack of reproduction, the second half of the CD features 22 audio samples and snippets of twinky bass drops for you to slice, dice and enjoy in your own studio. Will we hear this sound spread more in the future? Not a bad thought. *Donna Matrix*

SMYGLYSSNA: WE CAN FIX IT REMIXES

Vertical Form/UK/CD
Though there was never anything broken (well, besides the fractured beats) about Smyglyssna's *We Can Fix It* LP, a host of remixers pull out the pliers and plug-ins in this collection of remixes. Lex's Boom Bip does his best Prefuse73 imitation on the stammering "We Can Fake It"; Soft Pink Truth goes for low-slung electro-funk on "Work Shall Be Abolished," a tune that Fujiya & Miyagi take to sexy new depths of whispered glitch-grinding; Restiform Bodies propel "Tea with Angela" into a stratosphere of dead satellites and liquid silicon; and Einóma turns "We Can Take It" into a Gothic electro vortex of unspeakable darkness. Smyglyssna's own two contributions are fucked up digital funk of the highest order, somewhere between Twerk and Super_Collider. *Philip Sherburne*

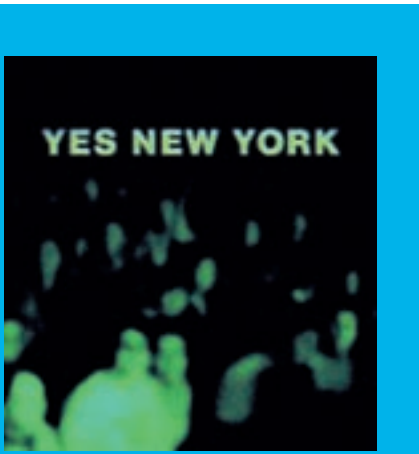


TOBIAS THOMAS: SMALLVILLE
Kompakt/GER/CD

Although one of Kompakt's less visible family members, Tobias Thomas has been intimately involved in the Cologne techno label's dirty work since its earliest days. Not a beat-mixer (gaffes make it obvious it's not digitally edited), *Smallville* purports to reflect the growth of a small dancing community—small, as in beatless (Kaito's mesmerizing "Release Your Body") and narrow-ranging (it's similarly calm through select cuts by Aril Brikha, Jan Jelinek, and Le Dust Sucker). The release is a pleasant if temporary indulgence amidst so many balls-to-the-wall anthem comps out right now. Oh, and it doesn't have shit to do with the TV show. *Heath K. Hignight*

WINSTON RILEY PRODUCTIONS: DANCEHALL TECHNIQUES 86-91

Maximum Pressure/UK/CD
The most effective way to reissue Jamaican music is by focusing on its producers. Such is the case with Winston Riley, whose importance to dancehall music is nothing less than crucial. It was Riley who produced the famed "Double Barrel" and "Stalag" rhythms. He was the epicenter of dancehall's emergence in the '80s, launching the careers of Pliers, Admiral Tibet, Super Cat, Cutty Ranks and Buju Banton, to name a few. *Dancehall Techniques* showcases the early works of those artists supported by the crisp digital production that made them famous. *Matt Fisher*



YES NEW YORK

Wolfgang Morden-Vice/US/CD
Twisting the Brian Eno-produced 1978 No Wave collection *No New York*, this first release under Vice Recordings' imprint Wolfgang Morden encapsulates a community—both a musical community and the musicians' very city of origin. In 9/11's wake, the entire nation got behind the sentiment in question—saying "Yes! New York!"—and New Yorkers rekindled the joy of looking up, getting out and getting down. The contributing acts—the Strokes, Radio 4, Rogers Sisters, Rapture, DFA, Calla, Interpol, the Natural History and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs (as Uniqurt), among others—burst forth with the strut and stutter that is their legacy of both 30 and two years of age. Regurgitating influences with a characteristic contemporary swagger, these are the sounds of a city's growing gangs—whether humid plodding, frenzied stomping, rigidly rhythmic or spastically discordant. *Tony Ware*



The man, the beard, the legend: François K.

HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS:
FRANÇOIS K./DEEP SPACE

If you say you know club music, but don't know François K, you've got a serious problem. Where to start? Over the past 25 years, he's produced and remixed everyone from Depeche Mode, Kraftwerk and Talvin Singh to Jimmy Cliff, Bunny Wailer and Black Uhuru. He's DJed around the globe and played Studio 54, Paradise Garage, The Loft and Ministry of Sound, along with his legendary, now-on-hiatus Body & Soul soulful house Sundays in New York. In short, this is the *man*. Right now, François is all about Deep Space, the dub-centered night he's curating at Cielo's on Little 12th St. in NYC, where you're liable to hear King Tubby alongside Lil' Louis Vega, Blaze and Stevie Wonder (not to mention live guests like Mutaburuka and Sidestepper). Between taking Deep Space to London and Tokyo, and onto the web at www.deepspaceny.com, Monsieur K let us know what he's putting through the echo chamber. *Ron Nachmann*

AFRICANISM PRESENTS LIQUID PEOPLE FEAT. HEIDI LEVO DON'T GO AWAY

Yellow/FRA/12
This is one of those records that you hear and might not immediately react to, but it really sticks in your head; the next time you play it, you won't be able to get rid of its infectious melody and sweet acoustic guitar work. Although slightly less percussive than some of the other releases in this very successful Africanism series, it's another perfect summer song with a gorgeous, sassy vocal hook, and it's bound to fill dancefloors everywhere. *FK*

AGENT K FEAT. CARLEEN ANDERSON RIDEAWAY, GETAWAY (BLAZE AND DJ SPINNA MIXES)

Giant Step/US/12
Released last year on the UK label Laws Of Motion, this song gets the proper remix treatment from Blaze and DJ Spinna for another top-notch Giant Step release. Spinna stays with the broken beat vibe and adds groovy but sophisticated melodic elements, while Blaze gets lush with wonderful orchestration. It's their trademark groove that brings this one home, especially in the second half of the vocal mix with Josh Milan's hooky synth solo. *FK*

AZTEC MYSTIC AGUILA (THE EAGLE)

UR/US/12
The prolific Detroit-based DJ Rolando introduces a brilliant follow-up to his now-classic "Jaguar" on the über-cool and mysterious Underground Resistance label. The very forward-thinking electronic production features the lushness and vibrant energy of disco strings, making this a natural for both house and techno DJs...which will also most likely keep it in my record box for a whole year!! *FK*

INSTANT HOUSE AWAKE (JOE'S JUNGLE SOUNDS DUB)

Natural Resources/US/12
Another monster remix courtesy of Joaquin "Joe" Claussell, who revisits a record he originally mixed in 1992. This has been one of my main staples for the last few months—thundering percussion and dub effects on top of a muscular synth bass that will make short work of any dancefloor. The b-side has stripped-down elements for even more creative possibilities in the hands of the adventurous DJ. Absolutely essential!! *FK*

DISSPLAY MANIPULATION EP

F Communications/FRA/12
In his Dissplay guise, Ludovic Llorca makes no bones about his contempt for the President of the United States. On this tune's breakdown, Llorca re-edits Bush's infamous March pre-war speeches in a less-than-US-friendly way. As for the music—it's superb, one of the best things from Llorca in a long while. It all depends on your political standpoint. *Luke Magnuson*

DJ NATHAN CATCH ME

Care/US/12
G'02 DOWNHOME
Sunset/US/12
Doubters of San Francisco's deep house legacy beware. Launching his Care label straight outta the Western Addition, DJ Nathan brings it percussive and dubby with his partner Hogi on "Catch Me" and "Wrapped," and goes a little old-school with DJ Adnan and them crisp claps on "Ocean Run." Meanwhile, Bernal Heights veterans Galen and Omar go techy and toss a shotgun snare onto "Downhome," while the flip's "Time's Two" exhibits some subtle tech tweaks before it's stripped down beautifully in an alternate mix. Hilltown up!! *Ron Nachmann*

DJ ROMAIN SAMBA SOUL SHAKE EP

Nu Faze/US/12
House's long-term love affair with Brazilian continues, as New York's Romain lives up to this record's title by offering frenzied percussion, punctuating bass notes and pumping key chords, augmenting the side with a conga-emphasizing dub. The flip's "Funky Swang" ties it all up with some Salsoul flavor and an epic string-section breakdown. *Compreende? Ron Nachmann*

PROBLEM KIDS FEAT. SHINE EYED GIRL TAKE A SMALL BREAK

HOLLWAY & EASTWICK DOWNTIME
Paper/US/12
Manchester gem label Paper get ready to call it quits after nine years and 100 releases. These—the 97" and 98"—betray none of the imprint's standards. First, Mark Wilkinson loops one of his old downtempo Problem Kids breaks, adds a lovely female vocal, then takes it to chunky house heaven. Then, label owners Elliot Eastwick and Miles Holloway slick up their early jazz-tinged house tune with some disco sheen. We can only tearfully say, "Bravo." *Ron Nachmann*

THE RHYTHM SLAVES MAKE IT WORK

Elevation/IRE/12
Cannes jazzy house don Richard Gow delivers a pair of thick, juicy cuts for Galway, Ireland's Elevation Recordings. Perhaps more impressive are the remixes by Shawn Ward and Freestyle Man, the former a smooth blend of delicate tech and jazz house, the latter a greasy, midtempo shake-down a la recent releases on Crack and Speed. *Luke Magnuson*

LUKE SARDELLO THE NEWBERRY CHRONICLES EP

Soundproof/US/12
Why Sardello didn't release this on his own Icon Recordings imprint is a mystery. Still, the fellows at Soundproof must have been over the moon when they heard his four tracks of dark, tripped-out, stripped-down house. The pick of the bunch is "Somebody Said," with its sloping bass, aquatic bleeps and acidic keys. Excellent stuff from the Dallas posse. *Luke Magnuson*

GREGORY SHIFF PUZZLE

Matter/Form/US/12
Gregory Shiff, New York City's master of all things tech and house, sheds his Sal Paradise moniker for this three-track workout on the Matter/Form imprint. Aimee Weaver provides vocals over Shiff's hypnotic house beats and shimmering chords on both main side mixes, while Matter/Form's own Francis Harris steps in for a tougher peak-time mix on the flip. Another solid release from this growing label. *Luke Magnuson*

SOUSSOL TAKE CONTROL MAS

Real Estate/US/12
Dare anyone try to improve on a house classic like JM Silk's foundational 1987 track "Let the Music Take Control"? In his Soussol guise, Chicago's Richard Gow does indeed, weaving piano and flute extracts from the original into his rich, dub-tinged version, which Brit producer Chris Simmonds augments with a tighter rub. And although satisfactory, the flip's jazz-house "Backwards Motion" doesn't quite measure up to the dancefloor power of the a-side. *Ron Nachmann*



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Off to meet his pal John Elbo: Matt Nee

TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS:

MATT NEE

From Chicago's own Cabrini Green comes one of the rowdiest "friendsters" the local techno circuit has to offer. As the founder of Kompute Records, Matt teams with popular global artists while issuing club-oriented, industrial-minded techno. With releases on Uppercut, BlueLine, Tora Tora Tora and many others, it's simple to decipher why this techno vagrant is one of Chicago's leading exports. *PRAXIS*

BILLY DALESSANDRO MIDIEVALIZATION *Resopal/US/12*

Nine tracks over two twelve-inches from Chicago's own Dalessandro here. Raw jacking madness with deep synth melodies and chord hits over the top, and thick bass below. All of the tracks here are players, while "Cyberstial" is my top pick. *MN*

FRAMED & FORMED *Iron Box/US/12*

"Deep Five" is Scott Findley's first appearance on Iron Box. Thick bass tones, smooth synths and tight percussion—an excellent production! Chicago's Souitek picks up where he left off on the last release, with a thick, deep groove and spaced-out sounds. My personal favorite is Brian Aneurysm's "Ignore Me"—cool hits and vocals over a jacked-up groove. *MN*

TIM VITEK STRANGE REVIVAL *H.O.R./US/12*

The revolution is here and Vitek is at the forefront. Futuristic vocal techno-punk on the original mix, while the MFV mix adds a guitar sample and aids the cause. The Shreve mix focuses on heavy industrial percussion and aggressive bass shifts, as Tommie Sunshine adds dirty synths and interesting samples to an otherwise broken beat. *MN*

ALGORITMO INDUS

Minus/UK/12
New York City's Ilana Ospina and Chris Kelly (a.k.a. GoodandEvil) hand over the good good minimalism for ol' Ricky Hawtin's imprint. While detached, the four tracks here hardly come off as typically clinical: among other things, you'll find warm, round basslines, distant piano plonks, shaker sounds, and—who'da thunk it?—a chanting female voice. Recommended. *Ron Nachmann*

GIRO ARAÑA "...Y TE SACARAN LOS OJOS"

Recognition/POL/12
Warsaw techno checks in with this beauty on DJ/producer Jacek Sienkiewicz's excellent label. Sienkiewicz's unlikely named fellow Pole Araña puts a bit of percussive grind into a Robert Hood-ish melodic style by either crunching it with high-register hits or tossing in yawning bass tones. In short, he knows what he's doing in the hard-minimalist realm. *Walker Lindh*

DASH DUDE REGULAR PLEASURES EP

Morris Audio/SWI/12
Dash Dude brings us some tracky vocals, deep grooves and glitch house jams with this EP. Though I don't speak any French, I'm definitely doing some really funky moves, like the French woman tells me to do on "A Hard Day's Night," which—along with "Assugreen"—is dancey as all get-out. On the flip we have two more gems: "Similarly Different" is a tweaky, glitchy micro-house piece, while "Do You Like Lemons..." is on the deeper tip. Perlon and Playhouse fans should check this EP out for sure. *Forest Green*

DJ BAM BAM HEAD TRAUMA EP

Columns Of Knowledge/US/12
Chicago's progenitor of choice jackin' fusion appears on this young, Connecticut-based label. Solid bass lines and even tougher vocal rhyms decorate the platter while floor-moving loops instigate an upward direction. With tracks this chunky, fans of Rush, Paul Langley and Mr. Berkovi should take particular note. *PRAXIS*

DUPLEX OVERDUE

Klakson/NETH/12
Straight outta Holland, techno hero Duplex continues to roll out some wonderful Detroit-style 4/4 innovation. "Entropia 03 mx" lands a jaunty, clap-laden thump and soaring keyboard melodies, contrasting "Subconscious"'s more swirling synth ballet and "quaoar LM 60"'s stealthy, melodic, breakbeat-ish romp. Superb. *Ron Nachmann*

HOLDGER FLINSCH TORANGA

Phono Elements/GER/12
Holger Flinsch presents his third release on Phono Elements, dropping another swirl into the splicing gene pool of genre-bending that's cur-

rently pervading minimal. The a-side draws and pulls with punchy minimal beats, utilizing the fine art of breaks in time, and verges on trance-out. The masterful b-side, an eight-minute journey through a 4/4 dream world, builds with a pleasant, flowing feeling reminiscent of top-notch mid-'90s ambient. *Chris Burtine*

ADAM JAY STASIS

Integrated/US/12
Indianapolis man of dirty, sensual dancefloor techno brings yet another hypnotic synth development to US soil. Funky yet deep bass tracks keep the crowd moving while a subterranean reverb colors the mix. A big sound for such a small piece of plastic, keep channels aware for future works. *PRAXIS*

BEN NEVILLE THE NORRIS DIVISION SUCKED EP

Telegraph/FRA/12
Ben Neville is the man! This Canadian sound engineer knows where to scratch you in that special spot, and boy does it feel good. On Telegraph's ninth release, Neville presents three sweet tracks from exotic house to minimal dub-techno, including amazing deep grooves and funky polyrhythms, which simply command you to bump or shimmy around the room. Not to be missed. *Forest Green*

MAURO PICOTTO ALCHEMIST EP

Primate/UK/12
Back after a year-long sabbatical, this guru of tribal trickery returns with a double-pack aimed at peak-time performance. From pumping tech-house to dangerously sharp techno, this EP carries functional diversity topped off by brilliant synthesis. Definitely one of the summer's top releases. *PRAXIS*

TIM TAYLOR VS. ANDY SLATE MUSCLE MADNESS

Missile/UK/12
Following up the epic re-release of the classic "Horn Track," Tim teams up with Budapest-based producer Andy Slate. With moods that reference early-'80s dance, this 12" shuffles along while highlighting alternating half-step sixteenth-note bass grooves. A bit less upfront of a melody than previous titles, and a positive leap for the imprint. *PRAXIS*

XERODEFX EARTH EXISTENCE

Tekmind/US/12
On the third release from upstart Miami electro imprint Tekmind, your boy Xerodex gives you some of that classic-style boom. "Diverse Life" smears tweaky high-register melody lines and apocalyptic chanting over the machine-beats, and that slight acid feel on the synth-centered "Elektronik Interior" gets a nicely distorted re-rub. Trust Miami every time—the future keeps beepin' at you from the beach. *Ron Nachmann*



"Dude, have you seen my gerbil running around?" Mathematics

DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: MATHEMATICS

Those who think the US is lagging behind in the soulful drum & bass revival better check the math. New York trio Mathematics—Roy Dank, BlueLine and Mike Genato—is one of America's most successful drum & bass acts at the moment. Both the merciless UK press and the D&B DJ cognescenti have bigged up their sharp, warm records, which have appeared on labels like Good Looking, Guidance, Hospital, and Renegade. Their most recent, "Drowning," featuring Brooklyn crooner Alison Crockett, sports that winning combo of thick, runnin' beats, big basslines and nice, synth-loaded R&B flava. So how do these three see the scene's output? *Ron Nachmann*

M.I.S.T. JAM HOT *Soul:r/UK/12*

This double a-side single finds this Manchester duo's undeniable wealth of talent on full display. While "Jam Hot" treads similar territory to previous works by M.I.S.T. (i.e. housey textures and vocals, rock-solid beats and a giant 808 bassline), it's the flip's "Outerspace" that surpasses any expectations we may have had of Marcus and S.T. Very much inspired by Detroit techno—with its soaring pads and snare rolls, it's no wonder "Outerspace" is an outright anthem. *MATH*

D.KAY & EPSILON COME EASY *Defunked/UK/12*

The Austrian bad boys who gave us the sublime Balearic drum & bass hit "Barcelona" unleash their debut single for the esteemed Defunked imprint, and what a single it is. Where "Barcelona" was somewhat straightforward in its delivery, "Come Easy" is on a deeper vibe, yet still has the tuff beats and bass to keep it firmly rooted in dancefloor territory. Here's hoping there's more to come from D.Kay and his collaborative efforts with Epsilon. *MATH*

SKC & LONGMAN BATTLEFIELD *DSCI4/UK/12*

Hungary's SKC is on fire at the moment. With all the top dons hammering both his darker material as well as his jazzed-out stormer "Limelight," he's now taken to collaborating with some of his fellow Hungarians, and by and large the results are off the hook. "Battlefield," SKC's joint effort with Budapest DJ Longman, is our personal fave at the moment, as it evokes memories of when dark drum & bass didn't entail just the aggro, evil shit. This is both dark and decidedly funky a la classic Konflikt and Ed Rush & Optical material. *MATH*

AMEN ANDREWS VOL. 1

Rephlex/UK/12
Andrews is none other than Luke Vibert, unleashing the first in a five-EP junglist revival. Over four tracks, Vibert delivers the chaotic-yet-funky madness that once thrilled us about jungle as he lets the drums ricochet, the bass bounce and the atmospheres warp in the format's best tradition. Be sure to check the dread styles on "10000001 Style," and watch yr bassbins. *Ron Nachmann*

BAD HABIT EP

Habit Recordings/US/12
One for the pounding darkside fans. Bkey adds urban jungle noises to his bump 'n' grind, Mason and Armani Reign get panicky on "Firemin," and Mindmachine delivers some trippy trance-meets-Hardware sounds on "Angst." Finally, Dylan blends hip-hop, pitched-down Amens, and classical music touches to create a '95 vibe. *Star Eyes*

TODD BUCKLER PILLOWTALK

Columns of Knowledge/US/12
New Englander Buckler throws down the gauntlet with a couple of burners. The title track surrounds a mournful cello melody with chunky "Bambaataa"-esque beats before crunching into three-chord punk 'n' bass land. A more sinewy mood pervades the flip's Amen-heavy "Cold," although the meat of the tune offers some dis-tractingly fuzzy production. *Ron Nachmann*

DAVIDE CARBONE FEAT. MC JAKES DUM DUM

Industry/UK/12
"Get Down" on the flip is a poinging dark thriller, but recycles too many familiar samples from the annals of hardcore. "Dum Dum" is unlike anything you've heard before, and it sizzles. Carbone presents a melodic intro before dropping into a fierce straightforward roller that uses MC Jakes's vocal tics—including a sing-song "dum, duh duh duh duh, dum" breakdown—as a loopy second melody. Innovative, and works the dancefloor. *Star Eyes*

D KAY AND EPSILON

BARCELONA/BARCELONA REMIXES
BC Authorised/UK/12
Simplicity is the key to this summertime winner. The groove itself holds court to little more than a strummed acoustic guitar loop and the super-crisp production of D Kay, with an instrumental and MC Stamina's vocal version appended by a slow-burning shimmer of synths from High Contrast and a power-rock deconstruction from Bad Company. *Kingsley Marshall*

I KAMANCHI HOLD IT DOWN

Full Cycle/UK/12
The second single from Krust and Die's much-vaunted collaborative debut album finds MC Taii telling a story of dancefloor culture over a bona fide Bristol runner. The flipside's "Moving Fast" sees Krust's influence prevail, with a bleak backing cooking up the congas like some kind of PCP-fuelled "Bambaataa." *Kingsley Marshall*

NUCLEUS & PARADOX FUNKIVITY

Paradox Music/UK/12
The first in a slew of singles from Dev Pandya and Nucleus before their *Esoteric Funk* album drops. "Funkivity" speaks for itself—'70s breaks rip apart the basswork of Bugz in The Attic's Mark de Clive-Lowe. Those who seek solace in the sounds of Bukem should flip this, where window rattling, switched-break atmospherica completes the package. *Kingsley Marshall*

TEEBEE LIFE CONTINUE

Photek/UK/12
Norway's Torgeir Byrnes finally achieves what must have been his long-held ambition to record for Rupert Parkes's imprint. Both cuts shiver under the golem-like gaze of ghostly vocals, with Teutonic beats keeping the brutal basslines of the title track in line before the flip, "Tech G," throws electronic blips and bleeps into the path of an oncoming percussive freight train. *Kingsley Marshall*

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Hip-hop's Peter Frampton: DJ Design

HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: DJ DESIGN
In the realm of stupid-fresh (and, when necessary, simply stupid) hip-hop, San Francisco trio Foreign Legion holds a special corner in the hearts of audiences worldwide. And standing behind the decks, DJ Design helps make those hearts throb to his A-1 beats. Both Foreign Legion albums, *Kidnapper Van: Beats to Rock Whilst Bike Stealin'* and *Playtight*, and their singles (including the latest, "Voodoo Star"), all on Look Records, find Monsieur D's fat rhythms ably buoying freakazoid MCs Prozac and Marc Stretch. In '04, Design's gonna follow up solo albums by Stretch and 'zack with his own second album. For now, as you read this, these three tweaks are goosing koala bears on tour in Australia and New Zealand. Hello over there, whatchya playin'? *Ron Nachmann*

PHIFE DAWG U KNOW U WANT IT *Smokin' Grooves/US/12*
I always liked Phife—while Q-Tip was keepin' it peace, the Five-Footer was always down to scrap, talk shit and bring rawness back to rap. Just like Chuck and Flav, they both need and contradict each other. As a solo artist, Phife is unfortunately in a difficult situation, because he's not Q-Tip. Not that he's not a great MC, it's that he ain't famous. So what? Should he just stop rapping? No, he should keep doin' his thing. And keep doin' songs with that kid called Jax like the one on this single. *DJD*

FIVE DEEZ FUNKY *IK7/US/12*
The problem with rap music today is that nobody knows shit about it. I've been sayin' lately that these days, some blonde girl in a Juicy Couture outfit driving down Rodeo Drive in a 2003 Range Rover on a cell phone could be noddin' her head to the latest 50 Cent exclusive 16-bar battle verse on a mixtape by K-Slay. Thank you Five Deez for puttin' out great music that still feels like I'm up on some new shit that hasn't been tainted by a Sprite endorsement. And secondly, who else can put out a track that's 132bpm and still sound so "Funky"? *DJD*

CANIBUS SPARTIBUS *Babygrande/US/12*
One thing that really has me scratching my head is this: Why would *XLR8R*, a magazine that promotes "accelerating music and culture," even hand me a "Canibus 12" to review? There even happened to be a press release that came with the single. Let's see..."Dear Friends, *Rip The Jacker* is a concentrated form of lyrical mastery that does not cut any corners with the rhyme content or imagery." Hmm...sounds good. *DJD*

BELLES IN MONICA SMOKED FILLED ROOMS
New Dawn Records/UK/12

Straight outta Glasgow, hangin' around with that weird group name and phat accent, MC Kruze throws down like a pro on that rare hip-hop species we once new as the drug cautionary, before battling nicely on the flip's "That All U Got?" Behind him, DJ Krash Slaughta brings the guitar and keyboard bits as well as some tight scratches. The European hip-hop community forwards into the next. *Walker Lindh*

C MONEY & DJ CHASE
LADIES CAN I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION
Stones Throw/US/12

It figures that one of the best singles of this year originally came out in 1989, a period when hip-hop was hitting its stride. Beatnuts affiliate VIC nicely jazzes up the timeless "Impeach the President" loop to let C Money showcase some classically smooth rhyming. And the flip is straight heat: hip-hop at 130 BPM, as Money uses a Big Daddy Kane sample to warn that he's "crushing MCs that be trying to riff," giving a tremendous vocal performance. *Pete Babb*

CANIBUS SPARTIBUS
JEDI MIND TRICKS FEAT. KOOL G RAP ANIMAL RAP
Babygrande/US/12

You suckas can go ahead and hate on a survivor like Canibus, but kid keeps comin' back to the battle with an impressively spiteful flow; and his producer Stoupe brings that Mediterranean/mandolin flavor on the beat, and a tight Rakim sample. Any MC that disagrees with him, wave ya arm. Stoupe then laces his main act, Jedi Mind Tricks, with some dirty Illadelphian orchestral shit for his MC Vinnie Paz and NooYawk's legendary Kool G. to flow on, making you pine for the time "before rap was just a swarm of white kids." Keep it movin'. *Ron Nachmann*

FAMILY TREE VIRGO
IOMOS MARAD EACH 1 TEACH 1
All Natural/US/12

Chicago's All Natural label continues to realize its dreams. Accompanying the uplifting Family Tree album track "Push, Move Build" is DJ Spinna's opaque remix of "Virgo" (featuring MCs Mr. Greenweed and the effervescent Rita J.), and the huge previously unreleased battle track "Regardless," featuring Prime and Daily Planet,

with hot cuts by Madd Crates. Meanwhile, MC Iomos Marad offers three tracks of primo now-school conscious rhymes off his new album, *Deep Rooted*, highlighted by "Appetite to Write" featuring J Live. Quite simply, this is the real hip-hop. *Ron Nachmann*

MEATY OGRE FEAT. ROBUST & RIFT NAPALM
FLIBBERTIGIBBIT
Galapagos4/US/12

Chi-Town underground producer Meaty Ogre has worked with Sage Francis, Qwel and Offwyhte, but this time locals Robust and Rift Napalm get the nod. On "Flibbertigibbit," Robust keeps it real: "I'm not your herol/I'm just a fuckin' weirdo." His witty flow fits the lazy, bass-heavy beat nicely. Rift Napalm drops SAT vocab over heavy guitars on the flip's "Long Dirty Word." *Ross Hogg*

MF DOOM VS. VIKTOR VAUGHN
CHANGE THE BEAT
Sound Ink/US/12

If Viktor Vaughn's voice sounds familiar, that's because it is. Damning the constricting time/space continuum, MF Doom (aka Zev Luv X of KMD) has prequed himself, conjuring up Viktor Vaughn, the man behind/before the mask. The two characters go at it over disparate beats—an eerie fragmented track and a head-nodder that keeps changing—and let the listener decide the winner. *Ross Hogg*

PHARAOH MONCH
AGENT ORANGE
Rawkus/US/12

One of hip-hop's most underrated lyricists melds clever metaphors ("I threw Iraq and Iran...Y'all wanna ask me Hussein") with a soul-baring hook for a scathing anti-war anthem. The track—a hypnotic, relentlessly pounding affair filled with quirky electronic gurgles—is more of a mixtape gem than a club banger. *Ross Hogg*

VARIOUS BLENDS
THE PICK UP
No Mayo/US/12

Production is the key to this Bay Area crew. The a-side has an okay-but-not-great beat, but the track is still noteworthy thanks to tight rhymes from the massively underrated (and unknown) Genessee. Things pick up with the b-side, "Tell U (Remix)," as Mum's the Word's soulful track keeps things interesting. The Blends are vets in this game, and their experience shows through in their consistently solid output. *Pete Babb*



I'd have a spill in me ear if not for these fuckin' headphones": DJ Hatcha

BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS: DJ HATCHA
If we're correct in identifying Croydon as the UK's answer to Detroit, then DJ Hatcha is definitely the city's Juan Atkins. Between his day job at the counter of Big Apple Records, his residency at the Forward monthly in London, and his radio spots on Rinse FM and Flight FM, this 21-year-old spinner has been instrumental in spreading the subterranean and viral sub-genre we know as dub-step. Check his debut

mix CD, *Dubstep Allstars Vol.1*, out now on Tempa Recordings to get the full skinny on this energized minimalist blend of 2-step, outlandish sci-fi effects, and both Jamaican and UK dub and dancehall flavors. In the meantime, let the man hold forth on a couple of the jewels that are out there. Whatchya now! *Ron Nachmann*

MAWO PATHWAYS
Big Apple/UK/12
This one's a Forward anthem. Serious dubstep flavors with a heavy African influence from this brand new artist. One of four tracks on the next Big Apple Records release. It's great to see so much of this tribal sound coming through in the dubstep scene. *DJH*

KODE 9 BABYLON
Tempa/UK/12
With a vocal and dub version of the Prince classic, this is sheer class without a hint of cover-version irony. The phattest bass since Dillinja and the production values of Theo Parrish! More class from Tempa. *DJH*

DARQWAN TAIWAN INK
Texture/UK/12
Gaining more and more momentum, Oris Jay a.k.a. Darqwan can do no wrong. This latest offering is seriously heavy, and proves that Oris keeps flipping the script time after time. With some quality Eastern flavors, this one's set for big tings... *DJH*

BIGSHOT EQ
Uptown Records/UK/12
Eight-bar fane tune in to "EQ," full of droning bassline goodness, "frequency" samples, and someone sawing away on an eerily high-pitched violin; for some reason, it's vaguely reminiscent of "War in '94." Flip for jamming 4/4s mixed up with almost '60s-esque organ sounds on the pounding "A Little Different." Haunted house vibes. *Star Eyes*

DON & DIRTY RIDING REMIX
LOES LEE & MENEATER
ROLSER
Moving Target/NETH/12
More European madness from the Moving Target posse. As Don & Dirty—German techno DJ Sven Dohse and freeform studio wiz Dirk Wagner—bring no-nonsense breaks on "Riding," the b-side's "Get Dun" offers up sparse, dark breaks with a tight ragga vocal sample. Meanwhile, label head Lee and partner Meneater give over their solid, sexy, electro-tinged "Rolsler" to Future Funk Squad for a stuttery, dirty-funky remix. Boom! *Hans Brixa Bargeld-Smith*

FUSION HOLD ME DOWN
Platinum/UK/12
Pure defiance from these snappy MCs, slightly on the Elephant Man tip, over an edgy riddim that switches from vertical jump to breaky stretch-out, with those ubiquitous high-register string stabs. Bangin' it out. *Ron Nachmann*

HEARTLESS CREW WHY? (STICKY REFIX)
East West/UK/12
Almost ten years on, DJ Fonti and MCs Mighty Moe and Bushkin reach a new and most accessible peak. Lovely strings stab at this "baby-why-ya-leavin'-me-just-cuz-you-caught-me" jam which offers up tight vocal harmonies on the chorus and a bumpy ragga verse. Big and tasty, like...oh, never mind. *Walker Lindh*

RAWKID WRECKER
Southside/UK/12
DILEMMA MC & MR. FIDGET
WHAT'S MY NAME
white/UK/12
Another two for 2-step's minimalist massive, a contingency well kept by London's mainstream and pirate radio. Rawkid brings the hollow claps and a

simple, dark, string-section swing over a beat that jumps like jack. Meanwhile, producer Do'naeo (as Mr. Fidget) gives his spitting electro-ish arrangements the quality rude street thing with that calm G, Dilemma, on the mic. Bam! *Ron Nachmann*

OCTOBER THE WIND UP
Dangerous Drums/GER/12
MACCABA HI-FI
KIND OF MAGIC
Viper Jive/GER/12
As parts of the global nu-breaks scene retreat worryingly into bland house revisionism, these Berlin labels chug onward. As October, Bristol's Julian Smith delivers a solid bit of buzzing synth funk for the vaunted Dangerous Drums label, and erstwhile drum & bassist Mulder takes it to the early-'90s Vinyl Solution school of tech-core machine breaks. On "Kind of Magic," Dr. Copasetic helps Viper Jive co-founder Circuit Breaker launch his imprint with cracking soul- and ragga-tinged party breaks, which Breaker and his partner Tosh give a subtle techno re-rub. Bing-bang-boom, it's all about Berlin. *Ron Nachmann*

SOTO HOOTENANNY
LAWGIVERZ A.K.A. R KIDZ & NOIZE PASSION
Botchit/UK/12
More badness from Botchit. The truesome two-some SOTO deliver a nifty title track that evokes the subtle melodic aspects of '80s electro, while the flip's "True" goes back to nu-breaks territory with great female vocals. Meanwhile, Lawgiverz's "Passion" gets a rumbling, epic refix from ILs and a snappier electro rub from Chris Carter. Both are tight, but "Hootenanny" has the edge. *Walker Lindh*

TRANSFORMER MAN
GROOVE BASED TECHNOLOGY: PART 1
Re:Connect/UK/12
Producer Ed Budd debuts as T Man with a simmering three-track EP of electro-breaks fusion. Wading in aqueous electronics, the rhythm of his a-side, "Invalid Command," emerges from its breakdowns with epic basslines and whooshing synths. The flip's slightly more downtempo "Evil Eye" and "Breaks in Disguise" keep it in crouch-and-growl mode, contrasting the other tune's vicious spring. Great start. *Ron Nachmann*



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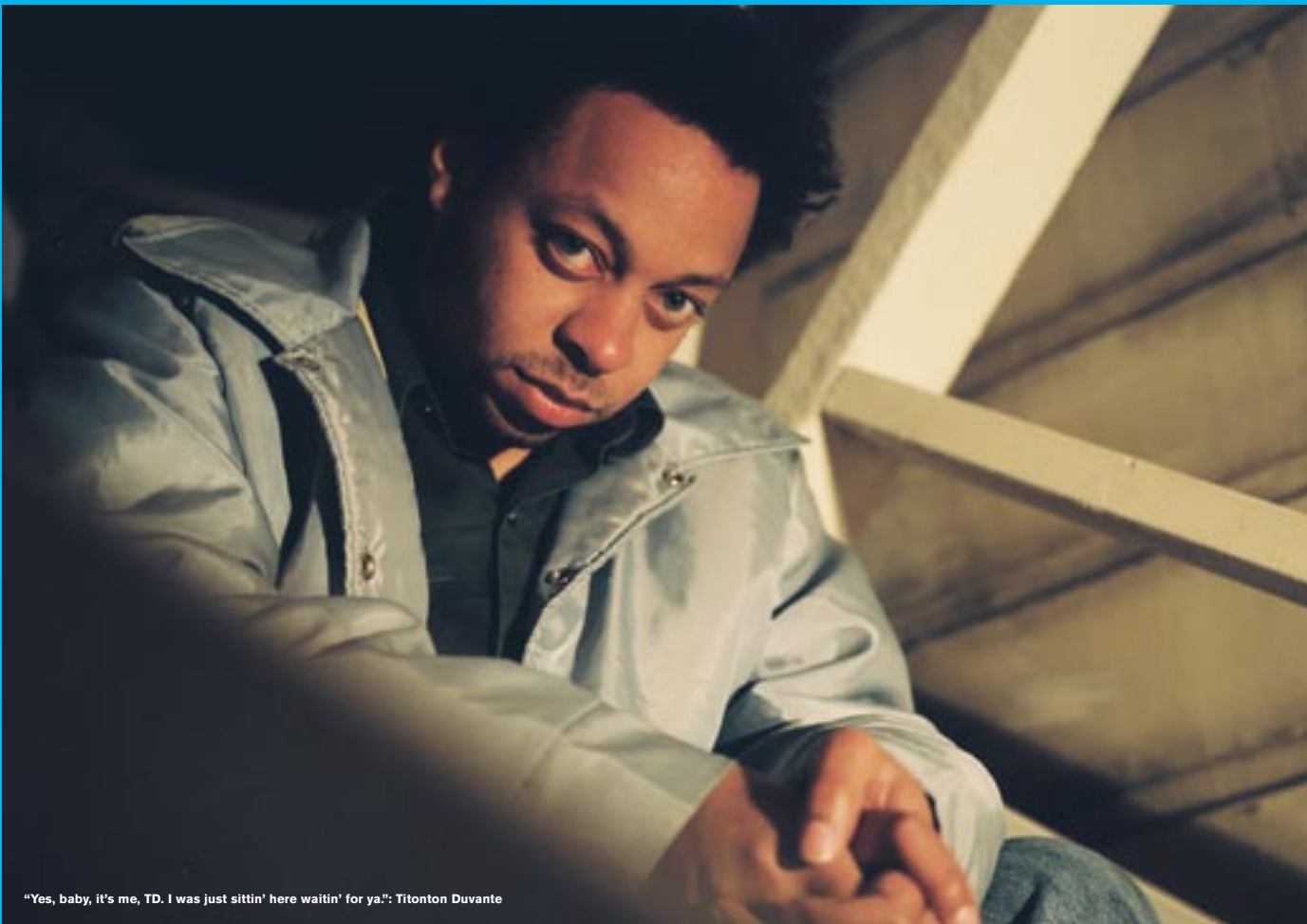
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Jessica Miller

"Yes, baby, it's me, TD. I was just sittin' here waitin' for ya!": Titonton Duvante

**FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS:
TITONTON DUVANTE**

Let a naturally curious Columbus, OH kid raised on disco and electro and trained in classical composition submerge himself in the new-new happening in techno and European future jazz, and what do you get? A lean, mean American broken beat DJ/production machine called Titonton. Your man Duvante has been seriously making it happen, releasing loads of singles, EPs, compilations and albums (including the magical *Selections for Intercourse*) on his own Residual label (and other imprints worldwide) and touring his dynamic and emotive DJ style throughout the US, Canada, Europe and Asia. And 2003 has been his year: coming up from Titonton this fall are two EPs for Residual, alongside other EPs for labels like Arision, Faces, Visions, Amalgama, Starbaby and Bitasweet. Then there are his remixes of Rima's "Let It Go" for JCR and Domu and Volcov's "Secret Powers" for Residual. (Details for all of these releases are found on www.titonton.com). So how the hell did this innovator find time to tell us what releases are boiling his blood? *Ron Nachmann*

**AL DA BUBBLE UNTITLED
MARK FORCE UNTITLED**

Archive/ITA/12
These two EPs are sure to cause havoc on any dancefloor. Both offer a taste of Detroit techno alongside tough beats. The Al da Bubble sounds like the result of Derrick May and Mr Oizo getting freaky with the drums. Mark Force brings the noise and the funk with rhythm programming similar to his "40 Days/40 Nights" single on Bitasweet. Bugz fully representin'. *TD*

SEASON JUICE (AFRONAUGHT REMIX)

Nuevo Ritmo/UK/12
What a way to start off a label! Bumping up the tempo a bit, Orin strips the track down to a funky-arsed skeleton whilst leaving Ernesto's r&b-influenced vocals intact. Almost a broken techno feel, with a cracking snare and analog bass growling at you. *TD*

STEPPAH HUNTAH WALK THIS STEP (SEIJI DUB)

Compost/GER/12
As if the original remix was not heavy enough with its live bass and sensual female vocal licks, the one like Seiji puts the emphasis—with a capital E—on the beatz. Live latin percussion atop programmed precision, with microsamples of the vocals, bass and '70s keys sprinkled for full effect. *TD*

ANTIBALAS AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA CHE CHE COLE

Daptone/US/12
Brooklyn Afrobeat kings go the Latin route by saluting Fania Records singer Hector Lavoe with this remake of his top moment, 1969's "Che Che Cole" with Willie Colon. It's all about razor-sharp horn section lines, giant percussion and the capable vocals of the lovely Mayra Vega. The flip-side rocks a Dibango-ish makossa version of the same tune. Both versions are solid—don't hesitate on this. *Ron Nachmann*

CHAMPION SOUL CONNECTING TO THE SIGN

Life Line/US-JPN/12
Brooklyn's Champion Soul represent the block with a single that slides from tough yet jubilant house (mixed down by their neighbor DJ Spinna) through Rhodes-drenched steppers dub that'll be caned by François K at his new Deep Space club night. It's their sound, their 'hood's sound, the world's sound. Don't front, you know they got you open. *Tomas*

CLYDE FEAT. CAPITOL A SERVE IT UP

Mantis/UK/12
Seems Brooks, Crazy Penis and Atjazz have jumped Clive "Clyde" Austin into their Derby, UK electro-house gang. He pays dues with a slippery, neon-lit funk number that's choppy enough to fit Philly/SF MC Capitol A's staccato prose. Tony Wah-Chu-Ku's Ritalin-popping remix plays hopscotch in your head, while the aforementioned Brooks gets regrettably nostalgic for hip-house on the flip. Tough turf. *Derek Grey*

DISSENT BLEEDING TOGETHER REMIXED

Wide Hive/US/12
San Francisco label Wide Hive leaves left-of-center jazz groove band Dissent's centerpiece jam in the hands of two capable producers. Om Records act Kaskade brings a soulful house re-rub, while NY hip-hopper DJ Eli gives it a prize Afrobeat treatment, with extra keyboard lines, funky horns and extra percussion. *Walker Lindh*

EASY ACCESS ORCHESTRA LAS CHICAS

*Ohm Guru I Wonder
Irma/US/12*
Judging by these previews from *Irma On Canvas 2*, that compilation will be a monster. EAO have their trumpet-tinged lounge jazz funk-ed-up by Ninja Tune's Herbalizer, Om Records house giant King Kooba and former be-bop D&Bers Flying Fish. Meanwhile, Ohm Guru have no trouble coaxing wonderfully galactic jigs from Jimpster and Fauna Flash. Better RSVP to this party quick. *Tomas*

ECHO THE REMIXES

New Line/US/12
Someone in the A&R department of New Line Cinema's nascent label is thinkin' with this one. Downtown NYC duo Echo (crooner Joy Askew and trumpeter/Organic Grooves regular Takuya Nakamura) get some quality re-rubs. San Fran house hero Jay-J caresses Nakamura's trumpet with deep beats and a Chicago-esque bassline, while UK downtempo macs Rae & Christian put jazz-soul voodoo on the flip's "Sparks From a Wheel." Solid. *Ron Nachmann*

OCOTE SOUL SOUNDS DIVINORUM

Fruitmeat-Giant Step/US/12
OSS trade in haunted Afro-Latin dirges from another planet. Planet Brooklyn, that is. Drenched in a dark tunnel of reverb, an explosion of free-jazz flutes, beaten-down brass and sashaying Afrobeat rhythms form a barbwire fence around this musical no-mans-land where only Fela and Ray Baretto have the proper diplomatic credentials. Enter at your own risk *Tomas*



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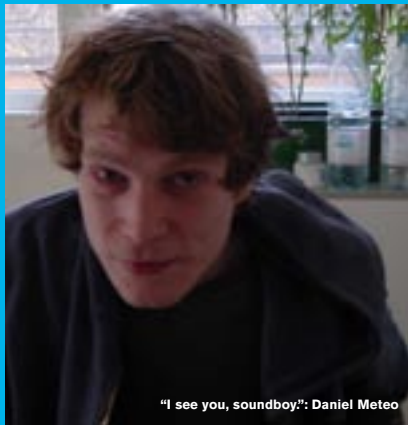
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LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS: DANIEL METEO
Forward-thinking dub fans, especially in Berlin, have a lot to thank Daniel Meteo for. He's been pushing the envelope for years, playing with dub band Submission, spinning fresh JA sets to screaming European dancehall crowds (as well as more experimental sets as part of both Stephen Betke's ~Scape label posse and Thomas Fehlmann's Ocean Club crew), and running Meteosound, one of Berlin's premiere beyond-dub labels. That imprint has released masterful tunes by dub stalwarts

like the Rootsman, as well as bits by upstarts like Fenin and Scottish dub-hoppers Monkeytribe. A 12" and album from his demi-pop minimalist dub trio Bus are scheduled for this fall, and based on that group's previous "Westen" single, we're in for some good times. Hey yo, Meteo, whatchya got for us? *Walker Lindh*

SUGAR MINOTT & SIZZLA COLLIE *Irie Vibes/JA/7*
The riddim for this one, Coming From The Country, is a great remake of the song "Oh Mr. DC" from Minott's Studio One times, produced by Clement Dodd. Sugar is my favorite: warm, big, sad and deep soul, great lyrics, big times. Sizzla's counterpart is not great work, feeding the younger crowds. Never mind—overall, a great record. *DM*

MIKKEL METAL REMIX EP PT. 1 *Echocord/DEN/12*
This new 12" from the young Copenhagen dub-tech imprint Echocord features remixes of Mikkel Metal tracks from the label's first four EPs. Jan Jelinek takes over the full a-side with one of his wise and deep mixes, joining time with soul, history with future. On the b-side, Dubtractor's mix is very catchy and maybe my favorite Mikkel track, and it's accompanied by a remix by Lowfour. Best selection of Northern European dub "culture" music. *DM*

RHYTHM AND SOUND FEAT. LOVE JOYS BEST FRIEND
Rhythm and Sound/GER/12
This is classic hit from now. Love Joys have never sounded better. Their story of "my best friend and my lover" is very sad—I lost my heart for this piece. Every time I think not even Rhythm and Sound can beat Rhythm and Sound, they just do it. "Best Friend" is music, and music is my best friend. Hope your love is strong enough for this. Crying on the dancefloor. *DM*

APPARAT KOAX *Bpitch Control/UK/12*
My friend Apparat, the co-owner of Shitkatapult Records (alongside everyone's darling T.Raumschmiere), presents this 12" on Ellen Allien's BPitch Control label that combines the dancefloor with his more ambient style. The three versions include an Ellen Allien remix and a very nice fourth track called "Fuse," with Ellen on vocals. *DM*

BARBECUE BEETS EP1 & EP2
DJ OLIVE COONYMUS EP
theAgriculture/US/12

Rising from the solid megaculturallectro legacy of We and multipolyomi, Brooklyn avant label theAgriculture sprints forward. Their two thick *Barbecue Beets* compilation EPs offer buzzy dub from Koosil-ja, long downtempo from Lloop, choppy techno from Sporangia, grouchy hopstrumentalism from Scotty Hard, chopped-out Spanish-flavored dub from DJ/rupture and lots more. Meanwhile, We alum DJ Olive offers up two shots of wonderfully wandering dubfunk and a full side of rapidly fluctuating urban ambience. Grab all three of these slabs. *Ron Nachmann*

JOSH ONE GREY SKIES EP
MyUtopia/US/12
THE REBIRTH THIS JOURNEY IN
Kajmere/US/12

Ah-ha! LA is on the uprise again. Josh-One reps for Los Skanless with four jazzy tracks that can samba as well as they can uprock. Oh, and Myka Nine's got them lyrics *covered*. The Rebirth (feat. members of Breakstra) is soul so deep that Gilles Peterson heard it across the pond and tipped his hat. Don't call it a renaissance. *Tomas*

LALI PUNA LEFT HANDED
Morr Music/US/12

The missing link between Múm and Stereolab, Lali Puna continues to weave subtle, emotive electropop yarns. Here, the killer is "Left Handed Dub," a slow burning no sleeper that sounds like Neu! as recorded by King Tubby. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

NOISESHAPPER THE SIGNAL
Different Drummer/UK/12

The modern dub scene in Europe is like a hybrid car mechanic who puts together an array of parts and gears (Viennese stoned beats, German microtechno, ragga) to create a smooth-running engine. Noiseshapper's dub house ("The Signal"), dancehall punch ("All Dem A Do" feat. MC Juggla) and Groove Corp-style breaks ("Keep The Focus") will handle the Autobahn with ease. *Tomas*

STRANGER & CAPTAIN DELICIOUS THE 84.000 EP
Electrogusto Music/US/12

Dub-house progenitor Ben Cook teams up with Corey Black for Electrogusto's first foray. And the results are tip-top. "The 84.000" is a delight of stripped-down dance mayhem that shows you where Chicken Lips might have learned a few things. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

T.RAUMSCHMIERE MONSTERTRUCKDRIVER
Novamate/UK/12

Working as T.Raumschmiere, Marco Haas—our favorite soft-spoken techno-punk bastard from Berlin—has hijacked the major-indie world, and here's his pre-album manifesto. The title track's grunting, buzzy and severely infectious uptempo 4/4 instrumental arrangement gets the flip-hop remix from Dabrye, while Miss Kittin brings the vocal pain on the stomping b-side, "The Game Is Not Over." Still catapulting shit at your stupid rave culture, bless him. *Ron Nachmann*

TV ON YOUR RADIO YOUNG LARS
Touch and Go/US/CD

Self-proclaimed "pan-African manimal" Tunde Adebimpe, "disastronaut" David Andrew Sitek, and "government foil" Kyp Malone make the kind of music Brian Eno and Roxy Music would be flattered by. Which is to say, quite nice. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

LUCKY 13

REVIEWS BY TOPH ONE

Let us now take a moment to address some current topics, shall we? Summer camper and all around foul-mouthed softball manager Jenny Ziemba has suggested that we rename this column "Sex in the Sunset," and I have no problem with that whatsoever... Red Wine DJ, Mr. Lif collaborator, and City Boy for life Doc Fu wants to start a Wino Action Committee (W.A.C.) with the expressed purpose of providing much-needed rides home for drunk DJs. He's also threatening a gubernatorial bid in Massachusetts so he can proclaim April 1st Mr. Lif Appreciation Day... Bubbie's Pickles are now our official food... Pepper turned 10 years old this spring with a star-studded bash at Milk. DJs Buck & Rasoul were joined by DJ Smash, Neon Leon and Marty on the decks. How to throw a nice 10 Year Anniversary Bash? Show up fashionably late on public transportation & give away tallboys of Budweiser by the bucket-full. Nothing says "house music" like free tallboys of Bud... Congrats to Kevvy Kev & The Drum on KZSU Stanford for 19 big years of The Greatest Show On Earth... Next time you find yourself in the Lower Haight, stop by Future Primitive's HeadQuarters shop, gallery & vagrant hideout on the corner of Haight & Steiner. Photos by Henry Chalfant, art by Doze, P-Nut & Romanowski, wine by Boone's...And it's official: loft parties at M3's are the Root of All Evil... Music, maestro...

- 1) PEPE DELUXE "SALAMI FEVER"** (*Emperor Norton/US/7*) Rubberband funk and big silly rock breaks filtered through the vocoder for loud, hot fun. Wake the neighbors—this may go on for awhile.
 - 2) GOAPELE "CHILDHOOD DRAMA (RMX)"** (*Skyblaze-ABB/US/12*) Get used to this gal's voice, because we're all going to be hearing a lot from her in the years to come. Already huge in the Bay Area. Now drop some "Chameleon" beats behind her? You're killing me. Loudly.
 - 3) STYLES OF BEYOND "MR. BROWN"** (*SpyTech-III Boogie/US/12*) Sounds like a hot Saturday night at Chocolate Bar in LA with that wicked rocksteady beat from the Flavor Crystals and Ryu & Tak's perfectly fitted vocals. This one gets maximum air. Also check the steel drums on Semi.Official's "P.A.A." (*Rhymesayers Ent.*) and DJ De's dancehall remixes on Sound Killers. Ride mi donkey!
 - 4) SERGE GAINSBORG "LA HORSE"** (*Cinemix/FRA/10*) The best thing to come out of France since Henry Miller, Serge struts his stuff on the ultra-rare and ultra-funky soundtrack to 1970 crime film *La Horse*. On the flip is Howie B's driving spacefunk version, and a sweet disco mix by Marathon Men. Well worth tracking down.
 - 5) VARIOUS BLENDS "I TELL U (RMX)"** (*No Mayo-Antebellum/US/12*) Fris-B and Ebony Frank bring it like a couple of old pros on this long-awaited new 12" off their new album. Uptown production from Mums the Word wraps it up tight. Nice one on the a-side, too: "The Pick Up" featuring Genessee, Grand the V.I., and the lovely Prin-Sess on vocal duties.
 - 6) MAINFRAME & PLATONIC "THE FUTURE'S OLDEST STORY"** (*Absence of Color/US/12ep*) Head-poppin' jazz breaks to work it on out... This could've been on *Totally Wired II* about 10 years ago, and fools in London would've been speeding it up plus 8 and flipping off the walls, but this is some nice shit for the Cali bar vibe these days, no doubt. Look! It's Mike York drinking sangria at Movidal!
 - 7) RSL "WESLEY MUSIC"** (*Players/UK/12*) And there's that Lil' Bastard Byron Brown chatting up Mr. Scruff at the Red Wine Social. Soulful guitar-driven jazzdance fun out of Manchester that comes on hella strong in the second half. Look out! Check "Star" on the flip: very Up, Bustle & Out-ish with its flamenco feel and Spanish drums, and that's a good thing.
 - 8) ART OF HOT "DISCO BREAK"** (*Loqa/US/12*) Deep, dubby disco from SF/Tokyo/Aussie veteran scenester Hyper D and partner C. Demetras. I like to slow it down to about minus 6 so it sounds like DJ Garth remixing The Clash. Hide the children, too, cause I hear they're fine-tuning the live show to hit the road...
 - 9) 3582 "VANESSA FROM VENEZUELA"** (*Hum Drums/GER/7*) How sweet is this J.Rawls/Fat Jon beauty? It warms my heart this windy afternoon when we haven't seen the sun break through the fog since the 4th of July. Yum. Let's all have sex now.
 - 10) DARK CIRCLE "CIVILIANS"** (*JazzFudge/UK/LP*) Heavy hip-hop sounds from this crew of "cross-border anarchists," featuring production by UNKLE founder Pats, with rhymes in English and German from Anik and Hoyke. Check "Make it Happen," "EuroStars" or the banging "Teletext"—that's my joint right there, kid. Dig Def Jux? Try this.
 - 11) DUDLEY PERKINS "MONEY"** (*Stonesthrow/US/12*) Dudley Perkins is a car reposessor from Gardena who moonlights as a lounge singer in a Thai place off Vine. Now that may or may not be true, but how many of you know that Dudley Perkins IS the only authorized Harley-Davidson dealer in San Francisco? Whatever. He's down with Tha Liks, Madlib produced his shit, and this record is TIGHT.
 - 12) SEÑOR COCONUT "HUMO EN EL AGUA"** (*Emperor Norton/US/12*) Let me tell you, nothing says summertime like a band of Danish-Chileans singing Deep Purple covers in Spanish. Already a Red Wine classic and a favorite down at Dalva.
- LUCKY 13) HERBIE MANN** (*R.I.P./US/artist*) Not only did the goateed flutist play with the likes of Roy Ayers, Bernard Purdie, Duane Allman and Donald "Duck" Dunn, he also got off lines like this: "If all the priests, rabbis & ministers had messages that were as believable and honest as the music of Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin and Marvin Gaye (and if they could also sing as well!) there would be a lot more love and a lot less hate in this world." You are missed, Herbie.



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THE LITTLE GIANT

For the computer music set, there's little mystery as to why laptop sales continue to explode with beanstalk fervor: giant CPU power in a tiny space has meant liberation from the desktop studio.

JL Cooper now offers super-size control to mobile laptop and bedroom musicians alike with their **CS-32 Minidesk**. Packed with 32 faders, seven knobs, a shuttle and over one hundred buttons in a space about the size of a 45, the mostly metal CS-32 (which comes in both USB and MIDI versions) is built like a tank.

I plugged the USB version into a Titanium PowerBook running OS9 (note: the USB version, which draws all its juice from your PC, requires a direct USB connection or powered hub), and—after a simple driver install—was quickly in complete control of several apps. Thanks to the included MIDI templates for all the major sequencing apps, all the CS-32's faders, transport and shuttle—as well as track mute, solo, arm, etc.—performed dependably. In this way the CS-32 acts like a dedicated controller, specifically tailored to your program of choice.

Functioning as a more generic device, the CS-32 really shows its power. With Ableton Live, for instance, I used the MIDI Learn function to set up the CS-32's myriad-lighted buttons to trigger audio clips. And as a soft-synth controller, the tons of tiny sliders are a godsend, transforming the carpal-tunnel-inducing chore of programming into an absolute joy.

If I have to gripe, the tiny faders on the CS-32 do make it a bit difficult for real-time mixing, and anyone not sporting freakishly small fingers will find it almost impossible to bring up side-by-side faders with any level of detail.

That is, however, the inevitable sacrifice for so much control in so little space. And that's just what JL Cooper promises with the CS-32. Massive control and small size, combined with the CS-32's solid construction and reasonable price, should quickly make it a standard both on computer musicians' desktops and in their backpacks. *Alan Stewart*

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STANTON ON THE VERGE OF GETTIN' IT ON

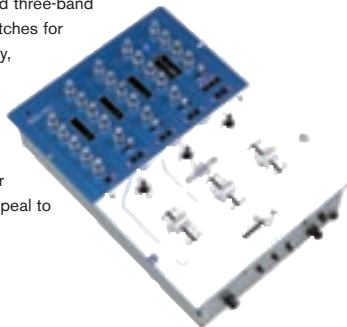
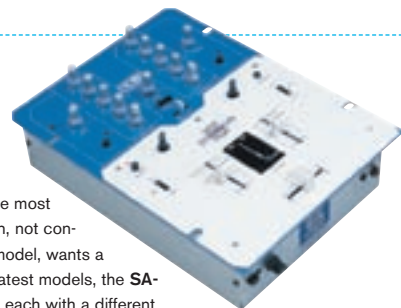
The mixer market has become one of the most fiercely competitive around, and Stanton, not content to rest on the laurels of its SK-12 model, wants a bigger piece of the pie. Enter its three latest models, the **SA-3**, the **SMX-401** and the **SMX-501**, each with a different design focus. The SA-3 is Stanton's basic scratch mixer, a descendent of Vestax's infamous 05 Pro in both form and function. It's got everything you'd expect a modern scratch mixer to have: reversible and curve-adjustable faders, two phono and two line-ins, 1/4-inch and RCA outs, and three-band EQing for each channel.

On the other end of the mixer spectrum is the SMX-401, which is geared for non-scratching house and techno DJs. Gone are the various fader adjustments, as they've been replaced with such mix-oriented features as three phono and six line-ins, a 1/4-inch effects send and return link, and three-band EQing, which also features kill switches for channels one through three. And finally,

there's the SMX-501, which is the link between the SA-3 and the SMX-401. It's a three-channel affair that takes the EQ, kill switches and effects send/return features from the SMX-401 and adds the scratch-friendly, curve-adjustable crossfader from the SA-3 to create an über-mixer that should appeal to blenders and scratchers alike. *Pete Babb*

MSRP: SA-3 \$199, SMX-401 \$299, MS-501 \$499
www.stantonmagnetics.com

Pictured (clockwise from top): SA-3, SMX-501, SMX-401



>> ...THE TONS OF TINY SLIDERS ARE A GODSEND, TRANSFORMING THE CARPAL-TUNNEL-INDUCING CHORE OF PROGRAMMING INTO AN ABSOLUTE JOY.

ASK ROBOT SPEAK!

It's *XLR8R*'s x-cellent gear advice column, where you, the reader, put your confounding questions to the music technology experts at computer gear shop RobotSpeak. Got a query about your bedroom, studio production or DJ gear? Send it to: tomas@xlr8r.com with "Ask RobotSpeak" in the subject line, and your answer may appear in the next issue.

Dear RobotSpeak:

I mostly make hip-hop and organic house beats. Which of the three new Spectrasonics sound modules would be best for my purposes? I like working with a lot of percussion and melody, so that's my focus in using these. Also, which sequencing platforms like Logic or Cubase do they work more fluidly with or not?

Dave Stengle, Cleveland, OH

Hello Dave,

Of the three new Spectrasonics virtual instruments you are referring to, Stylus (the "Vinyl Groove Module") and Trilogy (the "Total Bass Module") are best suited for the genre of music you're producing. Stylus gives you a huge palette of rhythmic drum and percussion loops with elastic tempo, pitch, pattern and feel in a variety of genres, and Trilogy offers an equally impressive library of electric, acoustic and synthetic bass patches (hence the name Trilogy). The third module, Atmosphere ("the Dream Synth" is, out-of-the-box, the most impressive of the three—my business partner Steve won't shut up about it)—but a bit on the "paddy" side and probably not all that applicable to straight-up hip-hop or house.

For those of you not in the Spectrasonics know, these instruments live somewhere in between soft synthesizers and samplers. Unlike a pure software synth—which produces sounds from scratch using oscillators, filters and envelopes—the Spectrasonics modules draw upon a library of pre-sampled waveforms as their sonic foundation.

Unlike your standard software sampler, you can't actually load your own sampled waveforms into these instruments. In this way, the Spectrasonics modules resemble sample-based hardware modules made popular by companies such as Roland and Korg. The biggest difference is that the Spectrasonics instruments aren't restricted by the relatively smallish memory available to ROM hardware modules, and all three ship with massive multi-gigabyte libraries of über-high-quality sampled sound waves. They sound insanely good.

As for the second part of your question, both Cubase and Logic are excellent in their handling of virtual instruments. Each of these sequencing hosts also fully recalls all of your virtual instruments' settings when you re-boot your session. The only sequencer not directly supported is Sonar, for which you'll have to use a DXI wrapper.

Alan Stewart, RobotSpeak
www.robotSpeak.com



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VIS-ED BRENT ROLLINS

EGO TRIP'S VISUAL SMARTASS IS BRINGING SOME MUCH NEEDED QUIRKINESS ONTO THE COVERS OF YOUR FAVORITE HIP-HOP RECORDS—AND HE HOPES YOU LIKE IT, SUCKER.

TEXT STEPHEN CHRISTIAN

The minds behind NYC's legendary *Ego Trip* magazine were the intelligent, wisecracking answer to every indie record store clerk know-it-all. They routinely delivered hysterical meditations on hip-hop, rock and all manner of pop-culture detritus. They found the perfect visual accomplice in Brent Rollins. His collage designs perfectly complimented the quirky brilliance of the writing by combining seemingly disparate images, from the Stay Puft marshmallow man, to porn stars, to kitschy '70s pics culled from obscure photo sources. In addition to his work on the magazine, both *Ego Trip* books and their *Big Playback* album, Rollins designed logos for classic films such as *Boyz n' The Hood* and *Mo' Better Blues*, and coveted skate company Supreme.

Brent's visuals struck a chord with DJ Shadow, who's had him designing for his Quannum label, including sleeves for artists like Lifesavas and Lyrics Born, as well as the severely sweated covers for both Blackalicious full-lengths. Never the slacker, Rollins has

been hurting his eyes staring at a computer screen designing for Chocolate Industries, collaborating with graffiti legend EASE on the cover for the latest Gang Starr LP, and working on a top secret video game, as well as designs for his own line of shirts and jewelry.

XLR8R: How and when did you get into designing graphics?

Brent Rollins: Like a lot of people, I was always the kid in class that would draw. I can draw, but I'm not the best illustrator, because I would always get frustrated. Then when I was in high school working for the school paper, I saw the masthead and I was like, "That sucks." Our high school had a graphic design class and I said, "Oh, I wanna do that." Even when I think about my earliest childhood memory, literally my first childhood memory, I must have been like three years old and I remember being outside my apartment building, and someone had a box of Good N' Plenty candies and I remember the graphics. That's my oldest

memory, the graphics on the box of Good N' Plenty, so that's kinda weird. Then, also in high school, I remember sitting next to this guy Aaron Murray, who was an old-school Dogtown skater, and he was *hot*, his artwork was incredible. I remember looking over his shoulder and being like "Whoa, this guy's on some other shit."

XLR8R: How did you hook up with the *Ego Trip* crew?

BR: In '94 I was the art director for this magazine *Rap Pages*, which is kinda embarrassing because it's remembered for being so bad. But there was a period when it was good. I just kind of got to know the whole journalistic world a little bit. Gabe Alvarez was the managing editor at *Rap Pages*, and he left to come to New York to basically work for nothing to work on *Ego Trip*, just because it seemed interesting and fun. We were both frustrated with working within the corporate environment, even though *Rap Pages* was owned by Larry Flynt. It's crazy, even working for



a pornographer, they would try to impose these kind of corporate rules on us sometimes, and we're like, "You're joking—you're making money off showing tail every month."

I always wanted to move to New York and I could never bring myself to do it, but since my friend was out here it seemed like a good excuse for me to move. When I got out here I was doing stuff for this guy Stereotype, and they were doing *Ego Trip*, and they asked me to do some stuff, so I did the last three issues of the magazine. It all kind of came together in those last three issues—they had the ideas and I always wanted to something weirder visually.

Ego Trip was really like a band—there was basically like a core of five guys and we had these other writers who were like our studio musicians. Each issue would turn into some weird thing—each issue wasn't even just a magazine. It had an identity. It was always like trying to do some kind of almost Terry Gilliam-ish, sort of *Monty Python*, sort of hip-hop version of that. Having these non-sequitur graphics come in, even though it's just a static page—I wanted to give it some life beyond just some normal type of graphics. That

definitely happened in the last issue, but then after that we were just burnt out.

XLR8R: Visually or otherwise, what influences your work?

BR: I really like '70s stuff, but not the '70s stuff you think of stereotypically. I like the way that company Hipgnosis would approach their album covers, it was really much more of a conceptual idea, like "What's the story we're trying to tell visually?" Music, always, but nothing specifically, just everything.

XLR8R: Is there an underlying philosophy that you follow when creating your work?

BR: You want something that people will want to keep. With records and even with the *Ego Trips*, I'm a designer, and I think I do artistic stuff and I have my own approach. But basically I brand other people. I think a lot of other cats did stuff to brand themselves. I have freedom to do a bunch of things, but not to do just one thing, whereas they can do anything within their style. But then they're kind of limited and if they want to grow beyond that, I don't know what their chances are.

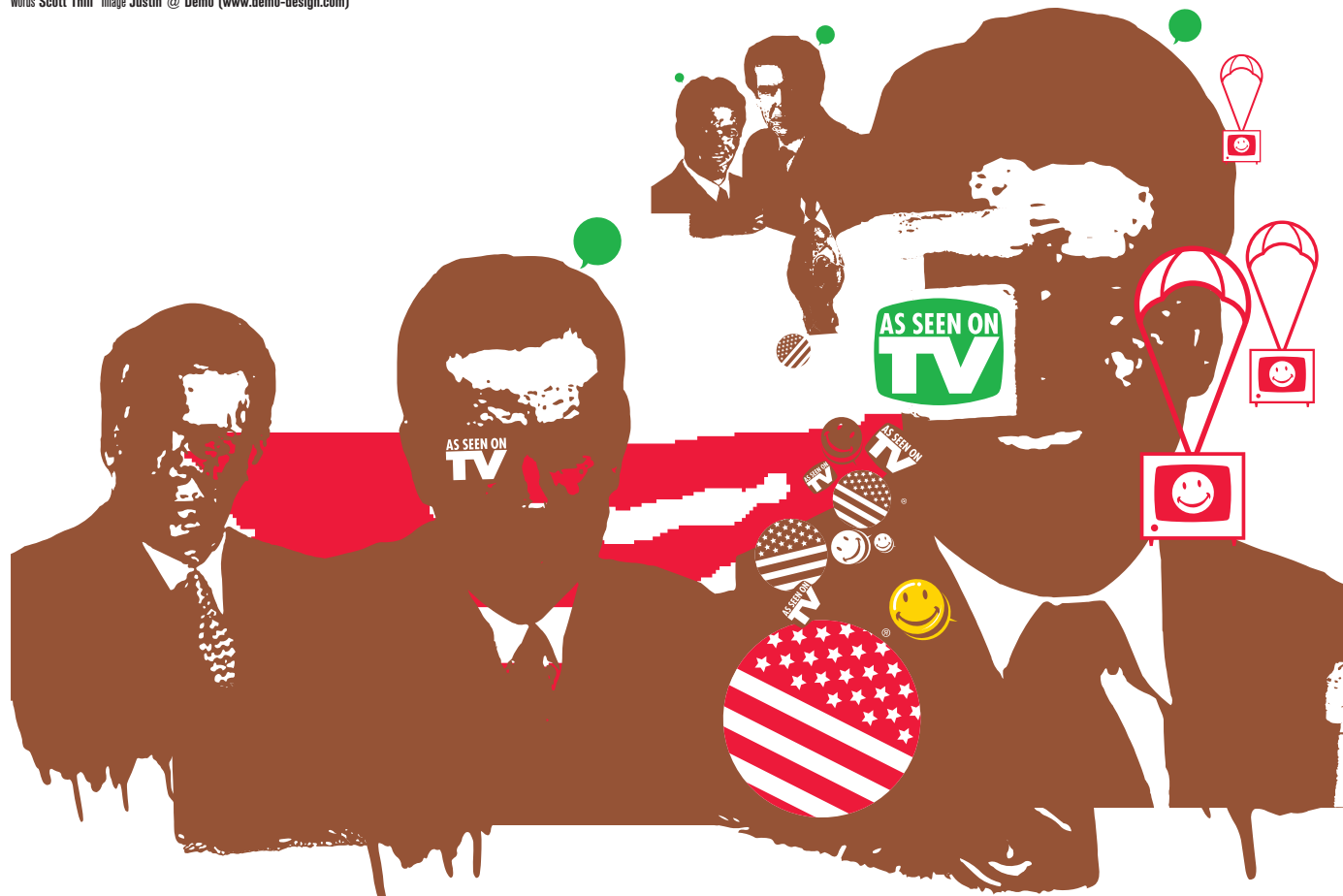
Ultimately, because I brand other people, I try to work on projects that I like or that I agree with their ethos. I never work with people when I think their music sucks.

XLR8R: The narrow-minded may say that the best visual representation of a hip-hop aesthetic is graffiti, but you do a lot of collage-type work for hip-hop projects. Why do you think it works so well?

BR: When I first started doing stuff for Quannum, when they were Solesides, the whole idea was to not look like the covers on the shelf. It's cool that there's more graffiti stuff incorporated now, because even as early as '94 or '95, there wasn't that much graffiti-based stuff. If it wasn't for Futura doing Mo' Wax stuff, no one would've even started fuckin' with that shit. I have no idea why it works, I hope it looks different than the other stuff on the shelf. I don't know, I hope it works just 'cuz it looks good. Hopefully people can appreciate that it's being done differently, it's not so pristine and anal that it's kind of techno-ish. It's still got a very home grown flavor. I would love to do a 50 Cent cover just to see what would happen style-wise. I think I could probably pull it off.



I WOULD LOVE TO DO A 50 CENT COVER JUST TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN STYLE-WISE. I THINK I COULD PROBABLY PULL IT OFF.



TBC AN INTERVIEW WITH GREG PALAST

WE'VE ALL HEARD THE PHRASE, "YOU HAVE TO READ BETWEEN THE LINES." IT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE WHEN IT COMES TO AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA. IN ORDER TO GET ANY SEMBLANCE OF TRUTH OR EXACTITUDE YOU HAVE TO FILTER YOUR NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES AND CABLE NEWS THROUGH A BARRAGE OF COUNTER-SOURCES AND BULLSHIT-DETECTORS. THANK HEAVEN FOR NEWSMEN LIKE GREG PALAST, WHO CUT STRAIGHT TO THE UGLY HEART OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL NEWS EVENTS. SCOPE HIS TECHNIQUES.

Where most so-called journalists get by on the official word from Donald Rumsfeld, Ari Fleischer, or whoever's floating the accepted perspective these days, the tenacious Greg Palast—author of the hard-hitting tome *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*—has taken to heart John Lennon's words: "gimme some truth!"

Unwilling to allow the dark heart of political culture to run rampant over civil liberties and justice, Palast is too hot for mainstream media. Which is why he reports from abroad—for the BBC, as well as the U.K.'s *Guardian* and the *Observer*—on stories that don't make the headlines in the U.S.

That's how American power might like it, but Palast nevertheless keeps plugging away, because he has a nose, and willing—sometimes nameless—accomplices for real news. Exxon Valdez? That was Greg. The 2000 election rigging in Florida? You guessed it. Enron? Before it was cool to bash them. If the *X-Files*'s Mulder and Scully had a reporter helping them get the word out on the hidden injustices of corrupt multinationals and governments, it would be Palast, who's still relatively unknown in American media. But that might be about to change. The truth is out there.

XLR8R: As a person who has to deal with the pressures of controversial investigations, does leading a normal life become an issue for you?

Greg Palast: Yeah, the normal life goes out the window, because you have to follow the trail while it's hot. If I want to know what's going on in Venezuela, I have to go down to Caracas. It's not dull. A lot of it is what some people like to call the glamorous Sam Spade stuff, but a lot of it is sitting in rooms with a lot of documents.

XLR8R: How many disaffected Mulders and Scullys [CIA, FBI, NSA agents] do you know that see crazy shit happen all the time and want to do something about it, until they're cut off at the top?

GP: How do you think I got the information about the quashing of the FBI's bin Laden investigation? We had some *unhappy* FBI agents. They gave the BBC documents showing that they weren't allowed to investigate two members of the bin Laden family because they were pissed off. And, obviously, if those agents are outed, that's the end of their careers. Or there were the people working in Bolivia [during the country's anti-globalization general strike in 2002 that led to the nationalization of the previously US- and UK-operated water company]—that was *really* dangerous. When you're getting information about Bolivian death squads, your sources for that information could end up dead. And I really worry about that. Some people that I work with take too many chances.

XLR8R: Isn't it incumbent upon mainstream media to acknowledge the dangers that these people face, and give them at least a little respect by covering their stories?

GP: Yeah, but they don't. The mainstream media actually hates whistleblowers. See, the big lie is that there are news guys out there dying for the big story. But the idea of a real investigative story is almost non-existent in US mainstream media. It costs money, it's very risky [because if you get it wrong, someone can sue you], and it takes time, especially when you're fighting Fox News and CNN, who are giving you the idea that the news happened 20 minutes ago. And the only way you can get so-called news that happened 20 minutes ago is when someone is selling it to you. I mean, I just heard on NPR that the president had a stickball team over at the White House. What the fuck was that doing on NPR?

XLR8R: Speaking of dissenting information, this 9/11 probe looks like it's going to be a huge mess for Bush and his cronies.

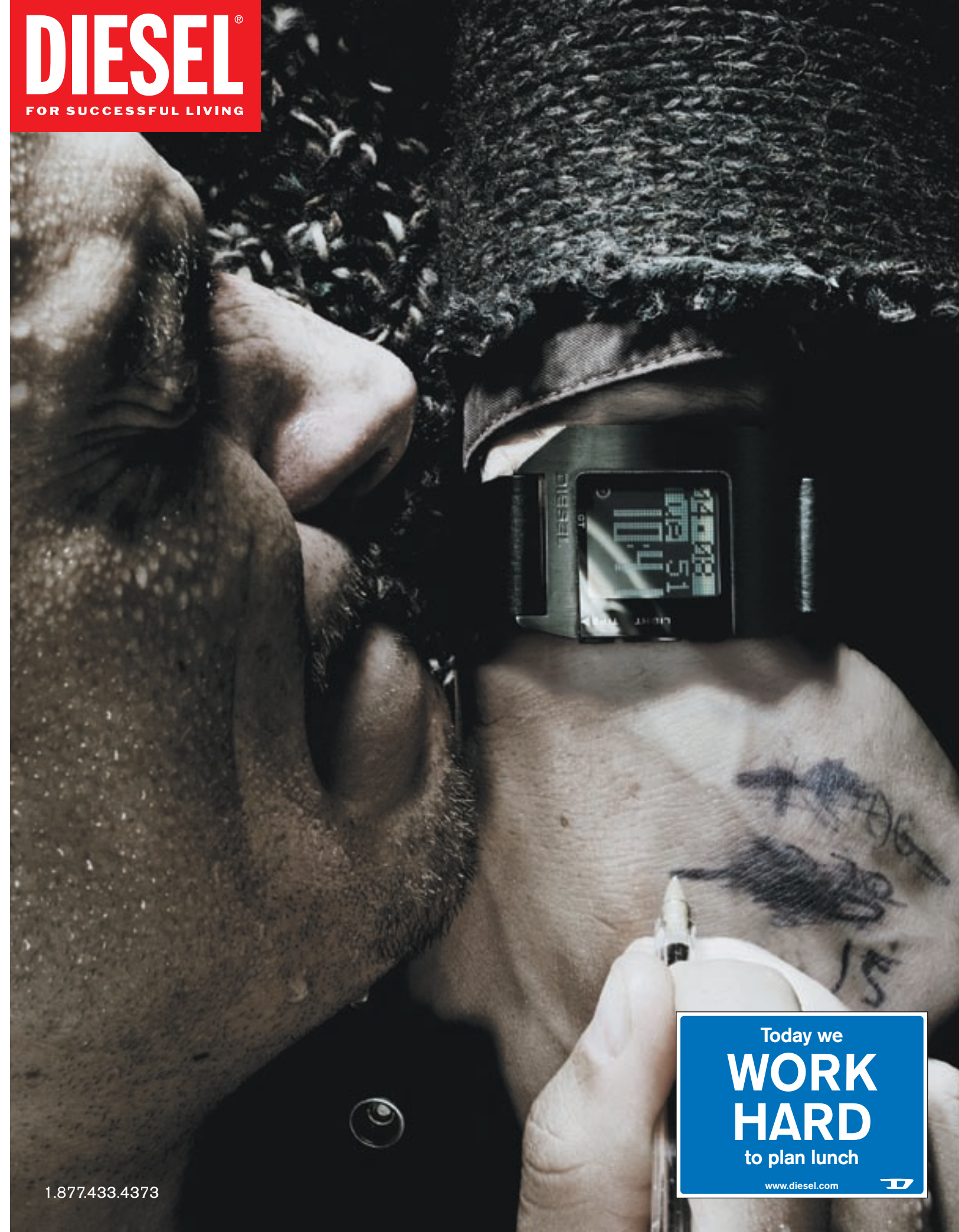
GP: Well, I'm not finding any evidence that George Bush knew about the attack or had a hand in it. But what we *are* finding is, in a way, more sinister, more disturbing, because it's a continuing problem. It's the money that's poisoning our system. Our intelligence agencies were blinded because they were not allowed to look into the friends of George W. Bush. Here's another thing no one wants to talk about. Our heroic president lands his jet on the SS Abraham Lincoln after standing up to the evil-doers, but now he's removing all the troops out of Saudi Arabia. And what's Al Qaeda's number one demand? Get all U.S. troops out of Saudi Arabia.

XLR8R: Right now, I think he's vulnerable. Are there any Democrats who can take him?

GP: Yeah, I think all of them can. I think this is the best line-up of Democrats we've had in decades. No one knows any of their names, but who the hell had ever heard of Bill Clinton? There's not one person running now that wouldn't have beaten the pants off of George W. two years ago.

Greg Palast's brave reportage can be viewed on his personal Web site (www.gregpalast.com). Snowboarding addict Scott Thill is the Editor in Chief of www.morphizm.com. He also writes for Salon, Popmatters, AOL, All Music Guide and others

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